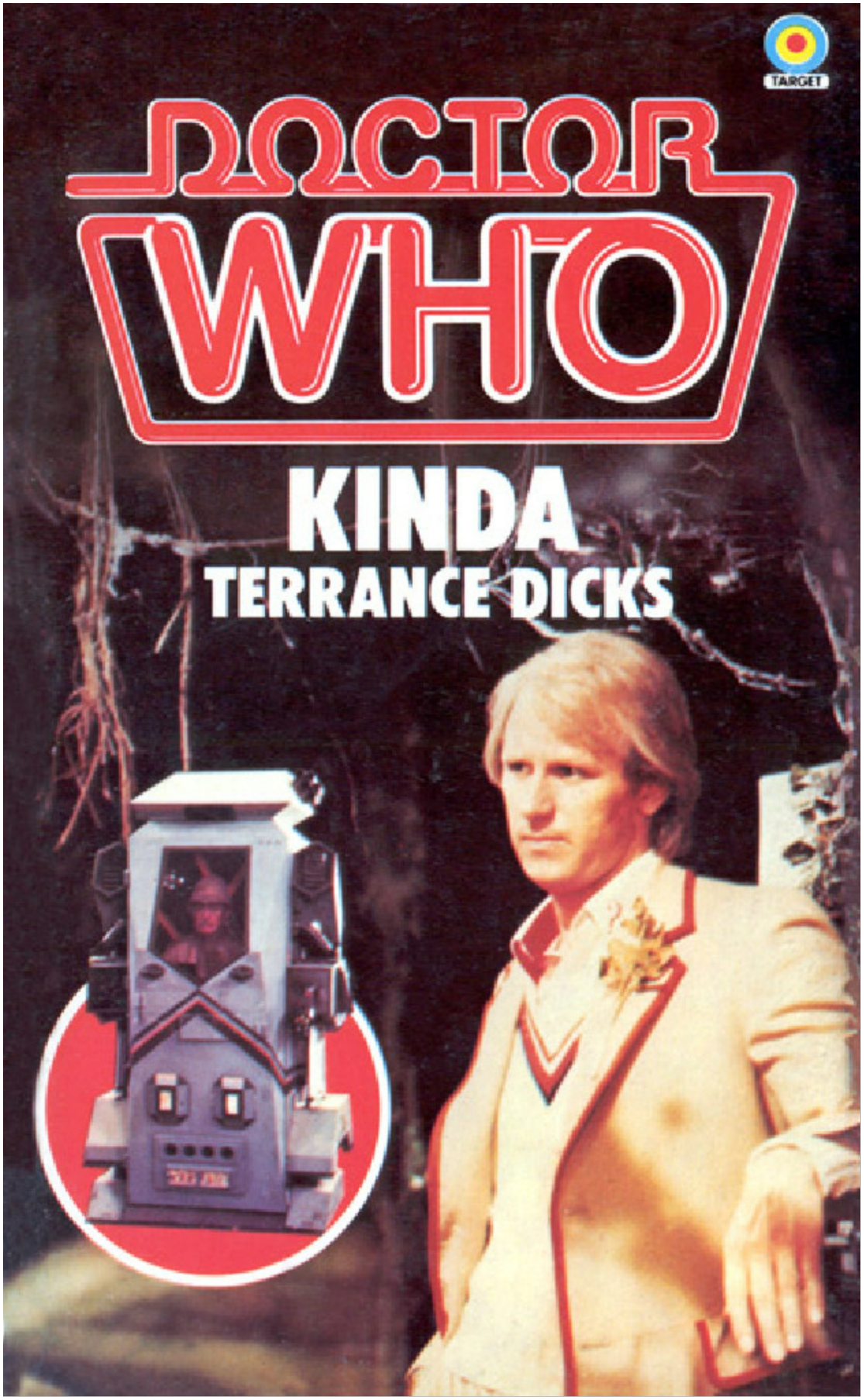
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KINDA

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**1**

## Dangerous Paradise

Deva Loka was a Paradise. Everyone knew that. The planet's surface was covered with rich sub-tropical jungles, and warm blue seas. The climate was temperate, the trees were laden with exotic fruits, all edible and all delicious.

None of the creatures on either land or sea was really dangerous. Even the local Intelligent Life Forms were harmless. A race of gentle humanoids called the Kinda, they were mild, utterly peacable, and apparently mute.

No doubt about it, Deva Loka was Paradise.

A Paradise where people disappeared.

The Dome stood in the middle of a jungle clearing. A white-walled pre-fabricated building, it formed a little enclave of high-tech civilisation amidst the surrounding jungle. It had its own generators for heat, light and power, its own weapons and surveillance systems. It also had inhabitants, three members of the Expeditionary Team that had landed to survey the planet.

Three survivors.

Young Hindle was alseep at his post. Tunic-less, wearing uniform trousers and shirt, he dozed before the huge monitor screen in the Dome's main room, head nodding, blaster cradled in his lap.

Before him, on the giant monitor screen, the beauty of dawn on Deva Loka unfolded unseen.

Morning sunshine flooded into the jungle, streaming through the gaps in the green canopy of leaves. Plants and flowers unfolded, gorgeously coloured birds chirped and whistled and sang, jewelled insects buzzed and hummed.

Hindle slept on, thin, intense features twitching as he muttered in his sleep.

Yawning and stretching, hair tousled, Sanders appeared from his sleeping quarters. Like Hindle he wore trousers and shirt, though even in this relative undress he contrived to appear smart and soldierly.

Sanders was Commander of the expedition, a grizzled, grey-haired veteran with years of service behind him. He wasn't a big man, but he was still slim, straight-backed and alert, with a fine military bearing. Most of the time he exuded a kind of gruff good humour.

Sanders looked thoughtfully at the sleeping Hindle.

Theoretically, falling asleep on watch was an offence punishable by death, but out here in the field rules and regulations could be stretched a little. Besides, Hindle wasn't really on duty at all. His watch was self-imposed.

Sanders was quite content to rely on the Dome's automatic defence systems. Sitting up all night nursing a blaster had been Hindle's own idea. He'd done it for three nights at a stretch by now, ever since the last disappearance, and he was getting edgy from lack of sleep.

Sanders smiled. No official action then, but a bit of a warning, to keep the boy on his toes.

He moved silently forward, and lifted the blaster from Hindle's grasp. Never play jokes on an armed man. Putting the weapon to one side, Sanders lifted a Kinda mask from a nearby table. Holding the fiercely grimacing visage before his own, he

kicked Hindle's swivel chair with a booted foot, swinging the young man round to face him. 'Boo!'

Jolted into wakefulness, Hindle opened his eyes and saw the terrifying Kinda mask leering down at him. With a yell of alarm, he scrambled to his feet, scrabbling for the non-existent blaster. Tossing aside the mask, Sanders gave a great bellow of laughter. 'What's wrong, boy? Bad dreams?'

He held up the mask. 'Just a joke, that's all!'

Hindle glared wildly at him speechless with rage.

In a smaller clearing not very far away there stood a shape even more incongruous than the Dome.

It was a police box, of a kind once used on the planet Earth. Or rather it wasn't a police box at all, it was a TARDIS, the space/time craft used by that mysterious traveller known as the Doctor.

At the moment the Doctor was nowhere in sight. A table and two chairs had been set up in front of the TARDIS, and two young people were solemnly playing draughts.

One was a snub-nosed round-faced young man in a yellow tunic, the other a fine-featured, rather aristocratic-looking girl, dressed in a kind of velvet trouser suit with puffed sleeves. The young man was called Adric, the girl was Nyssa of Traken, and both were companions of the Doctor.

A girl appeared at the edge of the clearing, and began walking towards them. She had close-cropped dark auburn hair and wore a uniform skirt and blouse. This was Tegan Jovanka, the Doctor's third companion. An Australian air hostess, Tegan had become involved with the doctor at the beginning of his fifth incarnation, and as a result had ended up a very long way from London Airport.

'Who's winning?' she asked.

Adric didn't look up. 'I am.'

Nyssa made a careless move, and Adric promptly took most of the remaining pieces. 'Thank you.' He looked up at Tegan. 'She's hopeless in her present state of mind.'

Nyssa was indignant. 'Don't exaggerate. I only fainted.'

'Twice!'

Tegan intervened. 'Where's the Doctor?'

'In the TARDIS, rigging up a Delta wave augmentor for Nyssa.'

Nyssa said determinedly. 'I'm quite all right, really I am.' She promptly fainted, sliding from her chair to the ground.

Matter of factly, Adric heaved her back into the chair.

'You see?'

Adric wasn't really all that unsympathetic, but this was becoming a habit.

Tegan helped him settle Nyssa back in her chair. Nyssa opened her eyes and said vaguely, 'I can't seem to concentrate, that's all...'

The Doctor appeared in the doorway of the TARDIS.

Now at the beginning of his fifth incarnation, he was a fair-haired open-faced young man wearing the dress of an Edwardian cricketer – striped trousers, fawn blazer and an open-necked shirt.

He peered thoughtfully at the sonic screwdriver, in his hand, and made a further adjustment. 'Don't worry, Nyssa nearly there.'

'What's wrong with her, Doctor?' asked Tegan.

‘Oh, just mild mental disorientation. Nothing that forty-eight hours induced D-sleep won’t cure.’

‘Is that the Delta wave augmentor?’

‘That’s right.’

‘No it isn’t,’ said Adric suddenly. ‘It’s your sonic screwdriver.’

‘Well done, Adric. At the moment, it happens to be *functioning* as a Delta wave augmentor.’

‘Supposing we need it?’

‘Here, on Deva Loka? Why should we?’

The Doctor took Nyssa’s arm and led her back inside the TARDIS.

Tegan looked round at the surrounding jungle. ‘I suppose we’re stuck here for forty-eight hours, while she has a good sleep?’

‘Well, you must admit, it’s a beautiful place to be stuck in.’ Tegan looked sceptical.

As far as she was concerned, if you’d seen one jungle, you’d seen them all.

Sanders strolled back into the control room.

Hindle, now fiercely and ostentatiously alert, was still on watch. Sanders glanced casually at the monitor screen.

‘No sign of Roberts out there, I suppose.’

‘No sir.’

‘Ah,’ said Sanders vaguely, and turned away.

Hindle leaped to his feet, crashing to attention. ‘Sir! As designated Security Officer, I should like to make an official protest at your failure, in the present dangerous circumstances, to institute a round-the-clock alert.

Furthermore - ’

‘Wait a minute, boy. What dangerous circumstances?’

Hindle gulped. ‘Sir, in my opinion - ’

‘Your *what*?’ barked Sanders. Junior officers had no right having opinions, and Hindle knew it.

He winced, but stood his ground. ‘Sir, in my opinion...’

His voice trailed off.

An attractive-looking woman in a crisp white lab coat came into the main room.

This was Doctor Todd, the Expedition Scientist.

Sanders said, ‘Doctor Todd, tell him!’

‘Tell him what?’

‘In your opinion, are we in any danger from the Primitives?’

‘I’ve *already* told him.’

‘Tell him again!’

Patiently Doctor Todd said, ‘The Kinda pose no threat whatsoever to this Expedition. They are culturally non-hostile.’

Sanders turned triumphantly to Hindle. ‘There you are!’

‘Of course,’ she added thoughtfully. ‘From their point of view, we might be said to pose a threat to *them*.’

Sanders was genuinely puzzled. ‘How d’you mean?

What point of view could they possibly have? They’re savages.’

‘There is the matter of the hostages we’ve taken.’

Sanders shrugged. ‘Standard procedure, that’s all.’

‘ *Our* standard procedure. Not theirs. Give me that would you?’

‘What?’

She nodded towards the Kinda mask, still on the console where Sanders had left it. ‘The Kinda artefact.’

Sanders picked up the mask and passed it over.

‘Thank you.’ She turned to leave.

Hindle, still standing rigidly at attention, realised that everyone was ignoring him. ‘Sir!’ he bellowed again. ‘I should nevertheless like my request to be entered officially into the Expedition Log.’

When it came to doing things by the book, Sanders was an old hand, with all the advantages of superior rank. ‘Oh you would, would you, boy?’

‘Yes sir.’

Sanders walked all round the rigid figure with the air of someone studying something quite unusually nasty. He gave a sudden parade-ground bellow. ‘You are improperly dressed, Mr Hindle. What’s more, you have not yet brushed your hair. Kindly retire and attend to it immediately. Dismiss!’

Impelled by the irresistible force of military discipline, Hindle turned and marched stiffly away.

Doctor Todd sighed. As far as she was concerned, they were all little boys playing soldiers. She turned and followed Hindle from the room.

With Nyssa tucked up and sleeping soundly, the Doctor suggested a little walk. Adric was quite willing, but Tegan wasn’t. She spent much of the time grumbling audibly about the general monotony of their surroundings.

Irritating as he found this, the Doctor was hard put to it to contradict her. The lush verdant jungle stretched endlessly in all directions and one clearing was very like another. Or was it? Suddenly the Doctor spotted something silvery and gleaming ahead.

‘There you are, Tegan, there’s always something to look at if you keep your eyes open.’

In the little clearing ahead of them, a series of shining transparent tubes hung from a central supporting framework.

Even Tegan was impressed. ‘What is it?’

‘That’s a very good question. Any ideas?’

Tegan picked up a loose branch and reached out towards the hanging tubes. She hesitated, looking at the Doctor.

‘Go ahead. I’m pretty sure it’s safe.’

Tegan ran the branch along the columns setting off a series of silvery notes.

‘Wind-chimes,’ said the Doctor. ‘Try that one. Now that one and that one...’

Obeying the Doctor’s instructions, Tegan struck the hanging chimes in turn.

‘There you are!’ said the Doctor. ‘A perfect fifth. A chromatic structure in eccentric sequence. Eccentric to our ears, that is. Not, presumably, to the ears of whoever built it.’

Bored with the music lesson, Adric was drifting away.

The Doctor looked up. ‘Don’t wander off too far, Adric, not on a strange planet.’ He returned his attention to the chimes. ‘So the question is, Tegan, who built this structure, and what’s it for?’

Doctor Todd looked on as Sanders went through his morning exercise routine. ‘You’re pushing him too hard, you know.’

Sanders began a series of vigorous press-ups. ‘Young Hindle? Nonsense.’

‘He’ll crack.’

‘You think so?’

She shrugged. ‘If you want my opinion.’

Sanders spoke in short bursts, between each press-up.

‘No thank you. Too many opinions... as it is... Meet a few difficulties and... suddenly everybody’s got... an opinion.

That’s how... things... fall apart!’

Sanders leaped to his feet and began running on the spot. ‘The boy’s a wash-out.’

Doctor Todd regarded the perspiring figure. You had to admire the old boy’s spirit. ‘That’s *your* opinion is it?’

‘Yes, it is. And the difference is, I’m in charge. I’ll tell you something, young woman. I welcome these difficulties.

It was all too easy around here. I was starting to feel at home. First time anywhere, in forty years... When you’re a couple of parsecs off Homeworld, that can be a very dangerous feeling, don’t you think?’

She nodded thoughtfully. ‘Perhaps so. That still leaves us with the question of what happened to Roberts, and the others.’

Sanders was still running. ‘It does.’

‘There are only three of us left now.’

‘I can count, young woman.’

‘Well?’

Sanders didn’t reply. He just went on running on the spot.

The wind-chimes swayed to and fro giving off gentle tinkling sounds. The Doctor studied them absorbedly, failing to notice that beside him, Tegan was swaying, as if hypnotised by the chimes.

‘Of course, Tegan, to build this, to achieve the delicate resonances involved would require a high level of technical skill. Yet look around you, no sign of civilisation, no roads even.’ He strummed the chimes. ‘Yet whoever built this must have a musical sense not entirely unlike our own.’

Tegan sank to the ground, her head in her hands.

The Doctor looked down. ‘Are you all right?’

Tegan yawned. ‘What? Yes, I’m fine. Just a bit sleepy, that’s all.’

Her head nodded.

‘Must be the fresh air.’ The Doctor strummed again on the chimes. ‘It’s all very puzzling, don’t you think?’

Adric’s voice came faintly through the jungle. ‘Doctor?

Over here!’

‘Now where’s he got to?’ muttered the Doctor crossly.

He hurried in the direction of the call, leaving Tegan still sitting cross-legged on the ground.

As the Doctor hurried away, Tegan’s head nodded still more, and she slid into a deep sleep.

The Doctor found Adric in a nearby clearing, staring at an object even more extraordinary than the chimes.

It was a huge metal shape, a kind of squared-off parody of the human form. Massive body, chest a battery of weapons, colossal arms with huge grippers at the end, a great square head. A robot? Not quite, thought the Doctor.

Why that unwieldy shape? Garlands of flowers were piled at its feet, like tributes to some savage god. He hurried up to it. 'Don't touch it, Adric. Whatever it is it looks distinctly unfriendly.'

Adric pointed to the weapon – bristling chest. 'Look at that lot! Direct beam weaponry! What is it, Doctor?'

Now that he was closer, the Doctor could see that the whole front of the thing had swung open, forming a kind of hinged door. Picking up a loose branch, the Doctor swung the front open a little wider, revealing a man-shaped space. 'It's an armoured suit, Adric! And I'd say its occupant was probably humanoid in shape. Binocular, bipedal...'

He indicated a cluster of sensitive filaments, in the head-space. 'The whole thing is controlled directly from the brain of the wearer.'

'So where is he?'

'Or she, or it.' The Doctor studied the little pile of fruit and flowers at the base of the suit.

Adric reached out and gave the open front an idle shove.

It swung closed with a decisive click.

Immediately the metal monster hummed with life.

Its weapons swivelled to cover the Doctor and Adric and it glided menacingly towards them.

'Stand still, Adric,' whispered the Doctor fiercely.

'Don't move. Don't move a muscle.'

The monster bore down upon them.

## 2

## The Kinda

Eyes closed, head slumped on her chest, Tegan sat cross-legged beneath the wind-chimes.

The Kinda came out of the jungle.

Dark eyed, brown-skinned, wearing simple saffron robes, the little group gathered around Tegan, staring solemnly down at her, their faces grave and concerned.

Some of them carried garlands of flowers, others various jungle fruits.

They studied Tegan thoughtfully for a while.

Then one of the Kinda placed a garland of flowers around her neck. Some of the others laid fruit at her feet.

The Kinda turned and melted away.

The Doctor and Adric were marching along a narrow jungle trail, herded by the metal shape gliding along behind them.

Despite the Doctor's instructions, it had soon become clear that the metal device *wanted* them to move – but only in the direction that it indicated.

It nudged them remorselessly forward, greeting any attempt to turn aside with a threatening metallic siren-roar and a menacing swivelling of its weapons.

They plodded grimly onwards.

The Doctor shot a reproachful glare at Adric.

Adric gave him a look of injured innocence. I'm sorry, Doctor. How was I to know I'd start it off? It must have some sort of auto-control function, so it can work with no-one inside it.'

'Adric! There is a difference between serious scientific investigation and meddling – isn't there?'

Adric nodded miserably. 'Yes, Doctor.'

He glanced from side to side wondering whether to risk making a dash for it.

The Doctor guessed his thoughts. 'I shouldn't Adric.

Besides – it looks as if we've arrived.'

There ahead of them gleamed the white shape of the Dome.

The machine herded them up to the main door, which slid open before them. It urged them through then stopped, blocking the doorway behind them. They were in a sort of airlock.

They found themselves confronting an inner door. This too opened, revealing a uniformed young man carrying a blaster. There were two others behind him, a grey-haired man, also uniformed, and a woman in a white coat.

The Doctor turned to Adric. 'There you are,' he said delightedly. 'I was right! Two arms, binocular, bipedal.

Human! Or humanoid at the very least.' He held out his hand. 'How do you do? I'm the Doctor, and this is my friend Adric.'

The young man with the blaster said stiffly. 'I am Lieutenant Hindle, and this is Commander Sanders, and that is Doctor Todd.'

Earth names, Earth ranks, thought the Doctor.

Presumably this must be the period when the Empire of Earth was expanding throughout the galaxy – and now it had reached out to this remote planet. He glanced round the big room, noting the huge monitor screen, the instrument consoles lining the walls, the chairs and tables, the general rather cluttered air of a place both worked

and lived in. The whole Dome had a somewhat temporary air, like a very sophisticated camp. A Survey Team, decided the Doctor. And judging by the general tension in the air, a Survey Team that had run into some kind of trouble.

The Doctor smiled and stepped forward, holding out his hand. 'I'm delighted to meet you all!'

The muzzle of the blaster jabbed him in the stomach.

'Stay where you are!'

The Doctor stepped back. 'Intentions unknown, hypothesis unfriendly, as K9 would say.'

'Where's Roberts?' snapped Hindle.

'Roberts? Was he in that suit thing?' The Doctor gestured over his own shoulder.

'Roberts left this Dome in the TSS - '

'I'm sorry?'

'The TSS,' repeated Hindle impatiently. 'Total Survival Suit, designed to provide complete safety in any environment. Now, answer my question. Where's Roberts?'

The Doctor looked down at the blaster. I'd be pleased to, but it's rather difficult to concentrate with that thing...'

The older man, Sanders, waved at Hindle who stepped back, though he still kept the weapon trained on the Doctor.

'Thank you!' said the Doctor politely.

'Well,' demanded Sanders. 'Where's Roberts?'

'I'm afraid we can't help you. That machine was open and empty when we found it. My young friend here closed it, triggered off some kind of recall circuit and it brought itself and us back here...'

'What are you doing on S14?'

'S14?'

The woman had been studying the newcomers with grave interest. 'Deva Loka. Land of the Kinda.'

'The Kinda are the native life form?'

'That's right.'

'The ones who built the chimes?'

'Yes.'

Sanders had been watching this exchange impatiently.

'Well?'

The Doctor scratched his head. 'I'm sorry, could you repeat the question?'

'What are you doing on S14?' roared Sanders.

Oh, just passing through.' The Doctor smiled disarmingly. 'I don't suppose there's any chance of any breakfast? Are you hungry, Adric? He usually is, you know what boys are like. If you could oblige?'

All three faces stared suspiciously at him. The Doctor sighed. 'Look. If we do turn out to be hostile, then fair enough...' He nodded towards Hindle's blaster. 'Until we do, why not give us the benefit of the doubt? Common sense, really, don't you think?'

Sanders considered for what seemed a very long time.

Then he nodded abruptly. 'Very well!'

In the jungle, beneath the wind-chimes, Tegan dreamed.

It was a dream of darkness.

In the dream, her eyes opened and she saw not the jungle clearing around her but an empty blackness.

Somewhere in the middle of that great darkness was a tiny Tegan.

Tegan, the Tegan of the dream, stood alone in an immense black void, mocking laughter in her ears.

The Doctor and Adric sat at a long table, spooning pink mush from plastic trays. Some form of condensed food compound, made specially for the use of Field Expeditions, thought the Doctor. Light, compact, nutritious and utterly disgusting.

Sanders stood watching them with a proprietary air.

Now that the initial suspicion had been dispelled, at least for the moment, he seemed friendly, and almost anxious to talk.

He gestured at the big monitor screen, which showed, as always, a panorama of verdant jungle. 'Know something?

I've never seen a planet remotely like this one. Just look at it. Paradise, isn't it? The sun shines, the birds sing, food grows on trees and even the local ILF is friendly – or used to be.'

The Doctor stirred his mush with a plastic spoon. 'The ILF?'

'Intelligent Life Form,' explained Doctor Todd.

'The Primitives,' snapped Sanders.

The Doctor nodded. 'In other words, the Kinda?'

Sanders looked reprovingly at the Doctor's untouched tray.

'You're not eating?'

'Er, no, I don't seem to be very hungry.' The Doctor swapped his full tray for Adric's empty one, and Adric went on eating stolidly. 'These difficulties you referred to.

What are they exactly?'

Doctor Todd was about to speak, then checked herself, glancing at Sanders.

Sanders grunted. 'Oh, go on tell him. Why not?'

'Originally there were six of us,' began Doctor Todd.

'You mentioned someone called Roberts. I gather he's missing?'

'That's right. And two more before him, Stone and Carter. All three disappeared, simply failed to return to the Dome.'

'You think the Kinda took them?'

'Impossible.'

'They're not dangerous then?'

'We just don't know,' said Sanders helplessly. 'You can't tell with the Kinda. They seem innocent enough and they smile a lot, at least, they used to'

The Doctor looked up 'Used to?'

'Until we took the hostages.'

'Hostages?'

'Only a couple! Standard procedure in the event of any suspicion of hostility. It's in the Manual.' It was clear that to Sanders the Manual was unquestioned and unquestionable.

The Doctor stood up. 'Could I see these hostages?'

'Why would you want to do that?'

'I have a friend who happens to be still in the jungle.

Naturally, I'm concerned for her safety. I'd like to know if the Kinda present any kind of threat.'

Sanders gave one of his abrupt nods. 'Very well. You can see them.'

Immediately, Hindle crashed to attention. 'Sir, I must protest!'

Sanders ignored him. 'Yes, of course you can see them.

Doctor Todd will show you. I warn you though, they're not very interesting.'

The Doctor felt that the Kinda were very interesting indeed. There were two of them, both males, imprisoned in a kind of cage in one corner of Doctor Todd's laboratory.

Brown-skinned, rather slenderly built, with large dark eyes and straight black hair, they looked not unlike some of the South American Indians of the planet Earth. They wore a kind of simple kilt. Necklaces of a strangely complicated design hung around their necks.

They sat on a little bench at the back of the cage structure, staring blankly ahead of them. The Doctor had borrowed a pencil-torch from Doctor Todd, and was shining it into the pupils of one of the captive's eyes. There was no reaction at all.

'Sanders doesn't believe they're ill,' said Doctor Todd.

'He says they're just sulking.'

The Doctor handed back the torch. 'With a complete absence of neuromuscular reaction? They're not sulking.

More likely suffering from shock of some kind wouldn't you think? Scarcely surprising in the circumstances. Your arrival among them must have come as something of a surprise. And then, when you locked them up...'

'I argued against it,' said Doctor Todd defensively. 'I told Sanders it was illogical.'

'Illogical, is it?' said the Doctor indignantly. 'I'd call it inhuman. Could we get out of this thing?' As, they left the cage he went on, 'Have you any idea of the effect of imprisonment on the primitive mind?'

Doctor Todd locked the door. 'Primitive, Doctor? Is that what you think? I'm not so sure. You saw those necklaces, all the Kinda wear them. Do they remind you of anything?'

The Doctor studied the intricately carved necklaces.

There was something very familiar about their design.

'Well, it could be the double helix...'

'It is. The heart of the chromosome – carved on a necklace worn by a race of primitives.'

Thoughtfully, the Doctor studied the impassive Kinda.

'But what could they know of molecular biology?'

The window of the laboratory looked out onto the inevitable jungle. The long bench-table that ran underneath it was crowded with rock and soil, samples, and with rows of plants neatly potted for despatch to the Expedition's Homeworld. The Doctor examined them thoughtfully.

Doctor Todd came to join him. 'It's an extraordinary planet, Deva Loka. No predatory animals, no diseases, no adverse environmental factors at all. The climate is constant within a five degree range, and the trees fruit in sequence all the year round.'

'So the Kinda have no need for shelter and no fears for food supply?'

‘Exactly! I’ll tell you something else. I think they’re telepathic.’

‘What makes you say that?’

‘They can’t speak. They have no language, and yet, somehow, they can communicate.’ She laughed. ‘Oh, take no notice of me, Doctor. It’s only a guess and guesses are not scientific. Have an apple.’ She picked up a red and green fruit and bit into it, tossing another to the Doctor.

He examined it thoughtfully. ‘I should have thought the native produce was forbidden.’

‘I’m a scientist, Doctor. I make my own decisions. I don’t feel bound by Hindle’s stupid precautions.’

The Doctor bit into his apple. It had a flavour not unlike the apples of Earth, but richer, more exotic.

For a moment they stood before the window, munching in companionable silence.

Doctor Todd looked out at the jungle. ‘Beautiful, isn’t it?’

‘Yes it is.’

‘You heard what Sanders called it? Paradise.’ She smiled wistfully. ‘Perhaps he said more than he knew.’

Somewhere in the distance silvery shapes were gleaming, figures moving about them. Tegan moved towards them, through an immensity of blackness. As she came nearer, she saw an old man and an old woman sitting at a little table playing chess. They wore strange and antiquated clothing in a style that looked oddly familiar. Elizabethan, that was it, thought Tegan.

Clothes and hair and skin were all of a ghastly, gleaming silvery-white, and the eyes glowed fiercely. They looked like ghosts.

Tegan stood looking down at the table. Both players ignored her. The old man stretched out a bony white hand and moved a pawn. A snake design ran down his forearm and onto the back of his wrist.

Tegan cleared her throat. ‘Hello!’

The old lady looked up. ‘You, my dear, cannot possibly exist. Go away!’

She returned her attention to the game. As she moved her bishop, Tegan saw that she too was marked with the snake.

‘Hello!’ shouted Tegan again.

This time both old people looked up.

‘Did *you* see her?’ whispered the old lady.

The old man gave her a cunning look. ‘Why? Did you?’

‘I asked you first.’

The old man cackled dryly. ‘So – you did see!’

‘It proves nothing,’ said the old lady loftily. ‘Just because an illusion is shared, that doesn’t mean...’

‘Oh, quite,’ said the old man. ‘Quite!’

They both peered at Tegan.

‘Besides,’ the old lady went on. ‘How do I know that what you think you see is - ’

‘What you think you see?’ completed the old man.

‘Or, of course, vice – ‘

‘Versa!’

‘Exactly.’ The old lady cackled triumphantly.

‘However,’ said the old man, ‘I can only conclude that you have invented *her* as a means of putting *me* off my game!’

Suddenly the strange old couple seemed to recede into the distance. From somewhere behind her, Tegan heard a snigger of malicious laughter. She whirled round, and saw a young man, watching her with an expression of sardonic amusement.

He too wore Elizabethan costume, doubtlet and hose and a ruff around his neck. Like the old couple, his skin and clothes were a livid white. His hair was cropped savagely short, his thin, bony face had a sly, jeering expression.

A snake design ran down his forearm and wrist, and onto the back of his hand.

**3**

## Ghosts

Trapped in a nightmare world, a world inhabited by ghosts who refused to believe in *her*, Tegan was still Tegan. She wasn't easily intimidated.

She stared challengingly at this new apparition. 'I suppose you're also going to tell me I don't exist?'

'Don't be silly. Of course you exist. How could you be here if you didn't exist?'

'But where am I?'

'Guess.'

'What?'

'Go on. Guess.'

Tegan looked round the velvet blackness that surrounded them. 'Looks like the middle of nowhere to me.'

The young man threw back his head, and gave a jeering laugh.

'What's so funny?'

'I'll tell you – some time.'

She pointed to the snake pattern on his arm. 'Why do you wear that thing?'

'Why shouldn't I?'

'The old couple playing chess wore the same design.'

'They would.'

'Why?'

'Because we're the same.'

'The same as what?'

'Each other,' said the young man, and he laughed again.

'Look, am I dreaming you?' asked Tegan desperately. 'Is that it?'

'Are you?'

'Or imagining you?'

'Possibly.'

'Well, I can abolish you then can't I?' Tegan closed her eyes, concentrated hard, and then opened them again. He was still there.

'Puzzling isn't it?' He laughed again. 'And by the way, one thing. You will agree to being me. Sooner or later.

This side of madness or the other.'

He vanished.

Doctor Todd looked on curiously as the Doctor wandered round the cluttered laboratory, picking up plants and test-tubes and rock samples, peering at them abstractedly, and putting them down again. He looked up and caught sight of another Kinda, a young man. He was standing at the edge of the clearing, looking wistfully at the Dome.

The Doctor pointed. 'Look, there's a Kinda out there now.'

'Yes, it's strange. He's often around. The others keep well away.'

The Doctor studied the young man's mournful face. 'He doesn't look as if he's living in Paradise.'

'No, he doesn't does he?'

'What are your plans for this planet?'

'Hindle would have a fit if I told you that!'

‘Oh well, of course, if Hindle would have a fit...’

She laughed. ‘All right, Doctor. The Mother-Ship will return in six seasons. If we’ve survived, we shall submit a report, which will then be assessed with a view to colonisation. Our Homeworld is very overcrowded.’

Suddenly, Hindle marched into the room. ‘What have you two been talking about?’

Doctor Todd gave him a chilling look. ‘I *beg* your pardon?’

‘I want to know!’

‘And what gives you the right? This is my laboratory.’

‘I am designated Officer I/C Security.’

‘What do you want here Hindle?’

‘Commander Sanders wants to see you. Both of you.’

Suddenly he caught sight of the apple in her hand. ‘What’s that? Give it to me. The Manual strictly forbids - ’

‘Does it really!’ She slapped the half-eaten apple into his outstretched hand, and strode angrily from the room.

The Doctor said cheerfully. ‘Well, you know what they say. "An apple a day – "’ He broke off. ‘No never mind!’

He hurried out.

Left alone, Hindle hurled the apple from him as if he feared contamination from its touch. He glared furiously around the laboratory, marched over to the bench with the plants, and hurled them to the ground with a flailing sweep of his arm.

Then, as if ashamed of his outburst, Hindle straightened up and began tidying his uniform. Remembering Sanders’

taunt about his unbrushed hair, he hunted round until he found a hand-mirror on a shelf. Holding it up, he straightened his tie, and smoothed down his hair.

Suddenly he saw the reflections of the two Kinda, watching him in the mirror.

He froze for a moment, and then slowly turned to face them.

In the Dome’s main room, Sanders was busily packing supplies and equipment into a field pack, while Doctor Todd, Adric and the Doctor looked on.

Doctor Todd said disapprovingly. ‘You’re not really going out there?’

‘Have you got a better idea?’

‘I was just pointing out - ’

‘Well, don’t! Nothing’s going to happen to me. I’m not Roberts.’ He snapped the pack shut and straightened up.

‘Oh, yes, while I’m away, Mr Hindle will be in charge here.’

The Doctor remembered Hindle’s hysterical behaviour in the laboratory. ‘Oh, I don’t think that’s a very good - ’

He broke off as Sanders roared ‘What?’

‘Oh, nothing!’

‘Good,’ snapped Sanders. ‘Oh, I can guess what kind of nonsense she’s been filling your head with, Doctor. Well, answer me this. If the Kinda are so clever, how is it they didn’t build their own Interplanetary Vehicle, and come and colonise us?’

‘I don’t quite see the point of that remark,’ said Doctor Todd icily.

‘The point is that the Kinda are just a bunch of ignorant savages.’

Adric had been quiet for an unusually long time now, and he was getting tired of it. ‘Mr Sanders, are you going out in that machine that brought us here – the Total Survival Suit?’

‘Yes, of course, boy. Why?’

‘Well, I was just thinking. If it malfunctioned in some way, that might explain what had happened to Roberts.’

‘Good thinking, boy,’ said Sanders approvingly. ‘Well done.’ He clapped Adric on the shoulder, and looked round at the others. ‘You see, that’s what this situation needs, good down-the-line practical thinking, that’s all.

Yes, I think you’ve hit it right on the nail!’

Hindle stared into the mirror and the reflected Kinda stared back at him. He had released the captives, who now stood in the centre of the room. He put down the mirror and turned round.

Immediately, the Kinda transferred their attention to him, watching his face attentively.

Hindle looked at the necklace around the nearest one’s neck. Immediately the Kinda took off the necklace and held it out to him.

Hindle took the necklace and put it on the table. ‘Very good, but how did you know...?’

Hindle decided to sit down for a moment. No sooner was the thought formed in his mind than one of the Kinda was behind him with a chair.

Hindle sat down and looked at the two Kinda standing in front of him. ‘Well!’ said Hindle softly. He formed another thought. Obediently, the Kinda squatted at his feet.

Alone in the immeasurable blackness, Tegan was almost relieved when the sneering young man reappeared before her. ‘Well,’ he asked arrogantly. ‘Have you changed your mind yet?’

‘About being you? No, I haven’t.’

‘Oh good. Because there’s somebody here I want you to meet. But perhaps you already know each other?’

Suddenly Tegan saw a shadowy figure standing behind him, its face turned away.

The figure came closer, turned round and Tegan gasped.

She was looking at herself.

The young man spoke with exaggerated, sneering politeness. ‘I do hope you two are going to be friends. Do you think you will?’

Tegan said coldly. ‘More tricks?’

‘Well, yes, I suppose so.’

‘A bit obvious, isn’t it?’

He laughed. ‘Oh yes, of course. A child could see through it. That’s why I like it. Obviously, one of you is real, the other is an illusion created by me. That *is* obvious, isn’t it?’

‘Yes, it is.’

‘Is it? Well, in that case, all that remains is for you two ladies to work out which is which. Obviously.’ Once again, he vanished.

The two Tegans looked at each other.

‘Hindle!’ shouted Sanders. ‘Mr Hindle!’

They were standing by the airlock now and Doctor Todd was still trying to make Sanders see reason. ‘But what’s your plan?’

‘Plan? I don’t have any. Where’s Hindle?’

‘Can I come with you?’ asked the Doctor.

‘Certainly not. You’ll stay here.’

‘I’m very worried about my friend Tegan.’

‘Don’t worry, I’ll keep an eye out for her...’

‘I’m afraid that may not be quite enough.’

Doctor Todd said, ‘Won’t you at least think twice about leaving Hindle in command?’

‘I never think twice about anything. Wastes too much time.’

The Doctor added his persuasions. ‘She’s right, you know. Hindle isn’t altogether stable. In fact, I think he’s on the verge of a nervous breakdown.’

Hindle appeared in the doorway.

The Doctor’s remarks made absolutely no impression on Sanders. ‘Well, there you are then,’ he said heartily.

‘Being in charge should do him some good, It might even make a man of him.’ He turned. ‘Ah, there you are Hindle.

I’m going to make a little Field Expedition. You’re in charge here now. Carry on! Now, back inside all of you, I’m about to close the airlock.’ He bustled them away.

Hindle said woodenly. ‘Very good, sir. A full account will of course be entered in the Log...’

The door slid shut.

The moment the door was closed, Hindle raised his blaster to cover the Doctor. ‘I’m afraid you don’t fool *me*, Doctor.’

Doctor Todd stared at him. ‘Don’t be ridiculous, Hindle.’

Hindle swung round on her. ‘And neither do you. You are no longer considered reliable.’

‘Really? Am I not? Then you’re going to have to shoot me, Hindle, aren’t you? I have absolutely no intention of obeying - ’

She broke off as the two Kinda hostages entered, both carrying blasters. They ranged themselves beside Hindle.

Doctor Todd looked at them in astonishment. ‘No... it isn’t possible.’

‘You are all under arrest,’ shrieked Hindle.

‘You have neither the right nor the power to arrest us.’

‘You forget,’ said Hindle menacingly. ‘I’m in command here now. His voice rose to a shriek. ‘I have the power of life and death – over all of you.’

## The Box of Jhana

The TSS smashed a path through the jungle, crushing flowers, grasses, even bushes in its path.

Inside sat Sanders, controlling the great machine with his thoughts. He was happy to be doing something again –

though exactly what he was doing remained a little vague.

The monstrous machine lumbered on.

In a calm and beautiful clearing not far away, an old woman and a young girl were listening to the sounds of the machine's progress.

The woman was *very* old, with fine white hair, and a brown wrinkled skin. Her wide open eyes stared blindly ahead.

The girl was very young, somewhere in her early teens.

Both wore black robes, and had crescent-shaped necklaces.

A small carved wooden box lay on the ground between them.

'Listen,' said the old woman. 'It's coming nearer. Have you got the Box of Jhana?'

The girl didn't reply and the old woman called,

'Karuna?'

'I am here, Panna.'

'What is the matter?'

'It is dangerous.'

'There is no other way. The Not-We must know how it is with us, the Kinda. Their very presence in the Dome is a threat to us. They must go away, and leave us in peace.'

'But what if they will not listen? What if they are angry?'

'Do as I say,' said Panna. 'You must not doubt. Your doubt is the only danger.'

Suddenly Karuna tensed. Although the old woman could not see her she sensed her unease. 'What is it?'

A young man stepped out of the jungle.

Karuna said, 'Aril is here.'

'Well, what does he want? Come child, quickly. Read him!'

Karuna held Aris's gaze, reading and relaying the thoughts that seethed in his mind. 'Fear,' she said slowly.

'Hurting and confusion... Where is my brother?'

'His brother is with the Not-We in the Dome.'

Still speaking for Aris, Karuna said, 'But why has he gone from my head?'

Amongst the Kinda, only certain of the females had Voice. All males communicated telepathically. Aris was complaining that for some reason the telepathic link with his brother had been broken.

'There is no time now, Aris,'said Panna impatiently.

'Not now. You must be patient.'

Karuna gazed into Aris's eyes for a moment then said,

'No! Not agreeing. Doubt. Why should I listen to you?

Don't the Not-We in the Dome also have Voice?'

Panna said, 'Yes, yes, of course they do. But it is not as it is with us. With them the Voice is not a mark of wisdom!'

‘But...’ began Karuna.

Panna interrupted her. ‘What is to happen here is far more important. Oh, why must he interfere? Do you understand, Aris? Well, girl, does he?’

Sadly Karuna relayed Aris’s thoughts and feelings.

‘Darkness. Understanding nothing. Heal me.’

Aris knelt at Patina’s feet, holding out his hands appealingly.

Panna shook her head. ‘Not *now*! There is no time. Aris, you must go away.’

Aris rose slowly, turned, and walked back into the jungle.

Panna cocked her head. ‘Well, what is he doing? What does he say?’

‘He is gone,’ said Karuna sadly. ‘He grieves because his brother is their prisoner.’

‘Yes, yes, we know. Listen!’

Karuna listened.

The crashing of the TSS was coming closer.

Adric held out two closed fists. ‘Go on, choose!’

The Doctor, Adric, and Doctor Todd were sitting glumly on the bench inside the caged-off section of the laboratory which had once held the captive Kinda.

The doctor studied the two fists. ‘Well, logically...’ He indicated Adric’s right fist. ‘That one.’

Adric opened his left fist and revealed a small copper coin.

The Doctor chuckled. ‘That’s rather clever, Adric.’ He glanced at Doctor Todd. ‘Don’t you think so?’

Judging by her expression of blank indifference, she didn’t.

The Doctor turned back to Adric. ‘You have unexpected talents.’

Adric held out his fists. ‘Again!’

The Doctor studied them. ‘Well, logic would indicate that one.’ He pointed to the right fist. ‘No, wait, I’ll try and second guess you.’

He indicated the left fist. Adric opened it. It was empty.

‘That one then.’

Adric opened his right fist. That was empty too.

The Doctor looked baffled. ‘Where then?’

‘Gone. Nowhere. Vanished.’

‘No, no, no, quite impossible. That would be in direct contradiction to the laws of the material universe.’

Adric produced the coin from behind the Doctor’s ear.

‘Ah yes, of course! Can I try?’

Adric tossed him the coin.

‘For heaven’s sake!’ exploded Doctor Todd. ‘We’ve been locked in here all night. There’s no sign of Sanders. Hindle must be completely unhinged by now. Shouldn’t we be applying our minds to some form of plan for escape?’

The Doctor glanced up at the spy-camera high up on the wall. Hindle might be mad, but he was almost certainly keeping them under continous observation. ‘Should we?’

She was too angry to take in what the Doctor was trying to tell her. ‘Shouldn’t we? Isn’t that what one does? One is locked up, one tries to escape...’

‘How?’

‘Oh, I don’t know, I’m not an expert. Some plan, some ruse, some trick. It might surprise you to learn, Doctor, that I have never actually been locked up before!’

The Doctor held out two closed fists. ‘Choose!’

She stared at him. ‘What?’

‘Go on.’

‘That one.’ She pointed to his left fist.

The Doctor looked disappointed. ‘Are you sure.’

‘Yes.’

‘Not the other one?’

‘No.’

‘Come on, open your hand, Doctor,’ said Adric.

Reluctantly the Doctor opened his left hand, revealing the coin inside.

Adric grinned.

The two Kinda hostages, prisoners no longer, stood to attention in front of the giant monitor screen.

Hindle had rigged them out in a sort of travesty of uniform, tunic and pith helmet worn incongruously above Kinda kilts. The final touch was provided by uniform ties, knotted loosely about their bare brown throats.

Hindle was delighted with them.

He marched up and down before them, inspecting them.

‘What’s this?’ he snapped, glaring at the nearest. ‘Your tie’s a mess, man. Here, let me show you.’

Solemnly, Hindle adjusted the knot on the tie that dangled down the Kinda’s bare chest. He took out his hand mirror and held it up. ‘There, you see?’ He put the mirror away, and resumed his march, strutting up and down before the two motionless figures. ‘I can’t be expected to attend to every detail myself, can I? It’s too much.’ He came to a halt. ‘Right. Defence of the Dome.’

Hindle himself looked absolutely terrible unshaven, tousle-haired, red-eyed from lack of sleep. His whole body was taut with a kind of manic energy.

‘Defence of the Dome!’ he repeated. ‘Its conception and implementation. Effective immediate.’ He glared at the Kinda. ‘Show me your fingernails!’

The Kinda held out their hands, and Hindle inspected them solemnly. ‘Right!’ He swung round, and studied the small desk top monitor which showed the three inhabitants of the laboratory cage sitting gloomily on their bench.

Hindle came to attention, saluting some unseen authority. ‘All prisoners present and correct, *sir*!’

The TSS crashed into the little clearing and came to a sudden halt.

From the viewing port in the front, Sanders stared down at an old woman and a young girl.

‘Are you ready with the box?’ asked old Panna impatiently.

Karuna gave her a worried look. ‘It’s another male inside. The old red-faced one who shouts.’

‘No matter. Continue!’

‘But you said only the woman could understand. You said it was very dangerous for a man.’

‘ *Do as I say*!’

Karuna picked up the box and took a hesitant step towards the great armoured shape that towered above her.

Immediately the weapons in its chest section swivelled to focus on her.

Karuna smiled and held out the box.

A metal arm ending in a clamp, extruded from the body of the TSS. It closed on the box.

'Go on,' called Karuna. 'Open it. Please, you must. We mean you no harm.'

The TSS's other arm came out, and the metal hands fumbled clumsily with the simple catch on the wooden box. It was quite true what Karuna had said. They intended Sanders no harm.

All the same, as the lid of the box slowly opened and Sanders peered inside, his eyes widened with horror, and sweat began pouring down his face.

All the armoured strength of the TSS could not protect him now...

The Doctor tossed Adric's coin up and down, watching it absorbedly as it spun through the air.

'Doctor,' whispered Adric. 'What about Tegan?'

Again the Doctor glanced up at the spy-camera. 'Ssh!'

Adric nodded understandingly.

The Doctor's eyes widened as the two Kinda soldiers marched into the laboratory. One of them touched a switch and the door of the cage slid open.

Hindle's voice came from an unseen

speaker.'Accompany them, please. And Doctor – be sensible!'

The Doctor looked at the blasters in the Kinda's hands.

'Absolutely.' He stepped back and waved Doctor Todd ahead.

As she left the cage, the Doctor leaned close to Adric and whispered, 'There's nothing we can do about Tegan at the moment. We'll just have to hope she's safe.'

He held out two closed fists to the Kinda guards.

'Choose!' No reaction at all.

The Doctor shrugged, pocketed the coin and followed Adric from the cage.

The Kinda marched them into the main room, where Hindle stood glaring suspiciously at the riot of lush jungle vegetation on the main monitor screen. 'Seeds, spores, particles of generation,' he was muttering darkly. 'They're everywhere. Eh, Doctor?' He turned from the screen, shuddering in disgust. 'Or rather...' His voice trailed away.

'Rather what?' asked the Doctor encouragingly. He was quite prepared to humour Hindle if only in the hope of finding out what was going on.

'Fungi,' said Hindle sinisterly.

'Ah yes. Fungi!'

'Bacteria!' hissed Hindle. 'Or even worse. Viri – as in virulent. Am I getting warmer? "Change and decay in all around I see". Eh, Doctor.'

The Doctor stared blankly at him. 'Where?'

Hindle waved at the screen. 'Out there! Growth.

Everywhere. At random, all higgledy-piggledy. But to what purpose? There's the clue.'

Hindle gave the Doctor a knowing look.

'Now, listen old chap,' said the Doctor, moving towards him.

Hindle leaped back, his face twitching with alarm.

'Stop! Don't come any nearer. I'm on to you, you know...'

The Doctor backed away. 'Oh dear...'

'Yes,' said Hindle triumphantly. 'I've had plenty of time to think. Do I have to spell it out for you, Doctor?'

'Well perhaps if you did - '

‘Why should I?’

‘Well, of course you don’t have to, old chap...’

‘No I don’t, do I?’ Hindle brooded for a moment, lost in his paranoid fears.

Doctor Todd said, ‘Look, this is ridiculous, Hindle, you are obviously in need of urgent medical attention and...’

‘Silence!’ screamed Hindle. ‘I need time to think.’

‘All right then Hindle, think. Think what Sanders will say.’

‘Silence!’

‘Doctor, you tell him.’

But before the Doctor could speak, ‘Sanders will not return,’ announced Hindle.

‘You’d better hope he doesn’t,’ said Doctor Todd grimly.

‘Well, why should he?’ said Hindle cunningly. ‘The others didn’t.’ He straightened up again, suddenly brisk. ‘I wish to announce the strategy for the Defence of the Dome. Implementation, immediate. We will raze to the ground and sterilise, an areaof forest in a fifty-mile radius.

Objective – the creation of a Cordon Sanitaire all around the Dome. Method of Implementation: Fire and Acid.’

Hindle repeated the words with relish. ‘Acid and Fire!’

Doctor Todd stared at him in horror. ‘That’s insane, Hindle. There *is* no danger.’

The Doctor gave her a warning glance and then said gently, ‘And what then?’

Hindle looked baffled for a moment. ‘Then... we shall wait for rescue.’

Doctor Todd said despairingly. ‘The Mother-ship doesn’t return for six seasons.’

‘We’ll be patient,’ said Hindle loftily.

‘Doctor, tell him!’

The Doctor ignored her. There was no point in trying to get Hindle to see reason, not until he understood the obsessions that were filling the clouded mind. ‘Tell me, Mr Hindle, what are you defending the Dome against?’

Hindle shot a quick fearful glance at the monitor. ‘Out There. Trees... Plants...’

‘I see. Perhaps we could define the exact nature of the threat presented by the trees?’

‘I’ve already told you, Doctor. Seeds, spores and things...

Everywhere! Thrusting, taking hold, rooting, thrusting, branching. Blocking out the light. Don’t you see?’

‘Nearly, nearly,’ said the Doctor soothingly. ‘What about the Kinda?’

‘The Kinda are not important. They are just the servants.’

‘Whose servants?’

Hindle looked at him in surprise. ‘Of the plants of course. The plants feed the Kinda. And in return...’

Hindle’s voice trailed off, lost in visions of some incredible plant/Kinda conspiracy. ‘That’s why...’ he muttered.

‘That’s why...’

‘And why do you think the plants are hostile?’

‘Because they are!’

‘Yes!’ said Adric suddenly.

He’d been silent for so long that everyone jumped.

‘Yes, of course,’ went on Adric loudly. ‘He’s got it right.

He’s absolutely right. The plants are the danger.’ He looked admiringly up at Hindle. ‘I’d like to help you.’

Hindle was delighted. ‘Step forward.’

Adric stepped forward, shooting a quick glance at the Doctor, who kept his face blank.

Presumably, Adric was trying to gain Hindle’s confidence by pretending to share his obsessions. A dangerous move, though it could be a very useful one.

Unless of course, Hindle really had convinced him. The Doctor smiled to himself. Not even Adric was that gullible

– was he?

**5**

## The Mara

Two Tegans sat back to back in the black void, both angry, both taking refuge in obstinate silence.

Finally Tegan, the original Tegan said, 'Come on, what are you thinking?'

'Don't you know?' asked Tegan Two sarcastically.

'Maybe I do.'

'After all,' Tegan Two went on mockingly. 'You'll have been thinking it too, won't you?'

'But I asked first.'

'So did I.'

'Oh, stop it,' said Tegan desperately. ' *Stop it*. If you must know, I was thinking about ice-cream.'

'Yes.'

'What do you mean, yes?'

'So was I,' said Tegan Two. 'I tried it first when I was three years old, and I didn't like the taste.'

Tegan stared at her appalled. 'But that's my memory!'

'And mine. *Stop it*.' Tegan Two turned away angrily and then said more calmly, 'Look, this is silly. What are we going to do?'

Tegan looked at her in despair.

The sinister young man's simple trick was proving horribly effective. So convincing, so identical was Tegan Two that Tegan was beginning to doubt her own existence.

Perhaps the other girl was real and she herself was the illusion.

'No,' thought Tegan fiercely. 'I'm real. I'm *real*.'

She remembered what the young man had said.

'You *will* agree to being me. Sooner or later. This side of madness or the other.'

The Kinda guard waved the Doctor and Doctor Todd back into the cage with his blaster, stepped back, relocked the door with an electronic key-card and moved silently away.

'What now?' asked Doctor Todd.

'I don't know.'

'Your friend Adric had a very sudden change of heart. I wonder what he's up to?'

'So do I.'

'Well, at least he's still free. I just hope he has more than his own interests at heart.'

Adric was on guard duty.

Obedient to Hindle's instructions, he stood gazing unwinkingly at the panorama of jungle on the big monitor screen, leaving Hindle free to spoon down a hasty tray of nutritious pink mush. The electronic key-card returned by the guard, lay on the table beside him. Adric could just see it out of the corner of his eye. Still staring at the screen, Adric said, 'What exactly am I looking for?'

'Everything,' said Hindle comprehensively.

'I see... wait a minute?'

'There is something.'

'Where?'

‘Out there.’ Adric twisted a control knob and the picture on the screen blurred and broke up.

Hindle rushed over to the console. ‘Out of the way. Let me see!’ Hovering intently over the console, Hindle re-focused the picture and panned the camera around the surrounding jungle.

Adric darted to the table, snatched up the key-card, slipped it in his tunic pocket and came back to Hindle’s side, just as Hindle swung round. ‘I can’t see anything.

There’s nothing there.’

Adric produced his wide-eyed, innocent stare. ‘Oh, I’m sorry. I must have been mistaken.’

Suddenly the two Tegans found themselves confronted by the sinister young man.

He looked thoughtfully at them. ‘Things could be much more puzzling you know. Have you thought what it would be like if there were not just two of you but...’

Tegan and Tegan Two said simultaneously. ‘Don’t think of it.’

‘Think of something else,’said Tegan Two.

Tegan nodded. ‘ *Anything* else.’

‘ *What* else?’ said Tegan Two breathlessly. ‘Quickly! Er...

er... whalebone!’

‘Watches.’

‘Windmills!’

Tegan hesitated, her mind blank. ‘Er, wibbers!’

Tegan Two stared at her. ‘What’s a wibber?’

‘How do I know? It doesn’t matter, so long as we don’t think...’

But now Tegan Two’s control had slipped. ‘So long as we don’t think "What if there were ten of us?"’

‘ *Don’t think it!* ’ screamed Tegan.

The young man laughed evilly. ‘Too late, I’m afraid.

You already have!’

And suddenly there *were* more Tegans. Tegan after Tegan, a whole crowd of them, two four, six, eight ten...

All the Tegans whirled and spun, and suddenly resolved into just one, leaving Tegan alone and sobbing. ‘What’s happened? Where have I gone.’

‘You’re you again,’ said the young man. ‘Don’t you see?’

Somehow Tegan was no longer quite sure.

Adric came into the laboratory, followed by the Kinda guards. He was carrying a tray on which there were beakers of water and some sealed food-concentrate packs. ‘We thought you might be hungry.’

Adric put the tray down on a lab bench and began passing the beakers through the bars.

‘What’s Hindle up to now?’ asked the Doctor.

Adric glanced up at the spy-camera and said solemnly.

‘The Defence of the Dome is proceeding as planned.’

‘Fire and Acid?’

‘Are being prepared,’ completed Adric.

‘Oh good!’ said the Doctor heartily. ‘That *is* good news, isn’t it? If in doubt, Fire and Acid every time, don’t you think?’

‘Are you hungry?’ asked Adric with curious urgency.

‘Ravenous.’

Adric went to the tray, came back and held two closed fists through the bars. ‘Then choose.’

‘What?’

‘ *Choose*, Doctor!’

‘Oh, I see. A little game!’

The Doctor hesitated. Adric glanced down at his own outstretched left fist.

‘That one,’ said the Doctor, holding out his hand just under Adric’s.

Adric opened his hand and let the key-card drop into the Doctor’s hand, which closed around it.

‘No!’ said Adric loudly.

The Doctor looked disappointed. ‘Oh! Well, that one then.’

‘Quite right!’ Adric opened his hand to reveal the food pack.

Suddenly the Kinda guards raised their blasters and Hindle’s voice screamed, ‘Wait!’

The Doctor looked up at the spy-camera.

‘Show me your hand, Doctor!’

The Doctor held out his empty left hand. ‘Certainly.’

‘The other one!’

‘Are you sure?’

‘ *Show me*, Doctor. Now!’

Blasters raised, the Kinda guards moved closer to the bars.

The Doctor sighed and opened his other hand revealing the key-card. ‘It was only a little game.’

‘If you make me angry, Doctor, you will regret it, I promise you. Guards, bring them to me!’

Since defiance had failed, Tegan was trying negotiation. ‘If I did agree to your – borrowing my form...’

The pale young man said eagerly, ‘Just for a while, perhaps only a few minutes...’ He leaned forward, his eyes glowing in the ghastly-white face.

‘Not that I am agreeing,’ said Tegan hastily. ‘But *if* I did... then what would you do – as me?’

He looked bored and sulky. ‘Oh, they always ask that!’

‘Well? What would you do?’

‘I assure you, you would be suitably entertained by the experience.’

Tegan considered. For some reason the sinister young man wanted to *be* her, to take her over. But apparently he couldn’t do it without her consent.

‘No,’ she said decisively. ‘I don’t trust you. Why don’t you just go away and leave me alone?’

‘You want to be *alone*?’

‘Yes.’

‘Very well.’

He disappeared.

‘Wait!’ called Tegan.

Then *she* disappeared.

Suddenly there was no Tegan, nothing but the blackness and a crushing unendurable terror.

'Help,' called Tegan feebly. 'Are you there? Am I? Where am I? Please, please, I want to come back.'

There was no reply, just empty blackness.

' *All right*!' screamed Tegan. 'All right. I agree!'

Instantly she was back.

So was the young man. 'You agree?'

'Yes,' she sobbed.

'Hold out your hand.'

Tegan held out her right hand, the young man took it, and immediately the snake flowed from his arm onto hers.

Tegan screamed, closing her eyes.

The young man vanished.

Tegan opened her eyes, looked at the snake on her arm and smiled. It was the young man's smile, sly and cruel and malicious.

Adric screamed as one of the Kinda guards, obedient to Hindle's will, flung him savagely to the ground, holding him fast.

'Don't hurt him!' shouted the Doctor.

Hindle looked puzzled. 'Why not?'

'Just – *don't*' said the Doctor firmly.

Somehow Hindle responded to the authority in his voice. 'Oh, very well.'

There was no word or sign from Hindle, but immediately the Kinda guard relaxed his grip on Adric, who got shakily to his feet.

The Doctor observed this keenly. 'I think you're right,'

he whispered to Doctor Todd. 'The Kinda *are* telepathic.'

She nodded. 'But why should they obey Hindle?'

'I don't know. I've tried to communicate with them myself, but I can't seem to get through.'

Hindle had resumed his manic pacing. 'The problem is, knowing what punishment would be most appropriate to...'

'To what?' asked Adric defiantly.

'To *teach* you... not to steal, not to commit treason, to wash behind your ears.' He lowered his voice confidentially, as if asking Adric's advice. 'It ought to be painful, don't you think?'

'For heaven's sake, Hindle,' said Doctor Todd.

Hindle shouted her down. 'When I was a boy, I was beaten every day. It never did me any harm. It made me the man I am today!'

'Look,' said the Doctor quietly. 'I have a suggestion.'

'Silence!' shouted Hindle, and then changed his mind immediately.

'All right, all right, *speak up*! What is it?'

'I was simply going to suggest that you banished him from the Dome, and left him to the mercy of the trees.'

For a moment Hindle seemed to be considering the idea favourably.

Adric started to feel hopeful. He could go and find Tegan. Somehow they would rescue the Doctor...

Hindle shook his head. 'No, no, Doctor. The trees *have* no mercy.'

‘Ah yes, I was forgetting that.’

‘Yes, you were, weren’t you?’ snapped Hindle. ‘Must I think of everything myself?’ He came to a halt. ‘Right! I wish to announce the procedure for the punishment of Adric. Implementation: Immediate!’

Suddenly Hindle became aware that no-one was paying him any attention.

They were all staring hard at the monitor screen.

On it could be seen the giant metal form of the TSS, advancing remorselessly towards the Dome.

Hindle gave a cry of pure terror.

‘No!’ he screamed. ‘No, that’s impossible.’

He dashed to the console and scrabbled at the controls, as if he could somehow make the TSS non-existent by simply switching off.

The monitor screen blurred, then somehow, in spite of Hindle’s efforts, the picture re-focused and the great metal shape reappeared, even larger and more menacing than before.

Hindle collapsed sobbing across the console, tears streaming down his face. ‘Oh no,’ he sobbed. ‘Not Sanders!

Mummy, Mummy, make him go away!’

Hindle had become a terrified child.

Tegan, the Tegan in the real world opened her eyes, and found herself still beneath the wind-chimes in the jungle clearing. She got quickly to her feet, and stood gazing around her. She looked down at the snake design on her arm, threw back her head and laughed.

But it wasn’t Tegan’s laugh.

It was the laugh of the sinister young man.

The laughter of the Mara.

**6**

## The Change

Hindle had managed to pull himself together.

Knuckling the tears from his eyes, he went to greet the returning Sanders.

The prisoners were left alone, guarded by the Kinda.

'I never thought I'd be so glad to see old Sanders,'

whispered Doctor Todd.

'He's the first one to return, isn't he?' asked the Doctor.

'Yes he is.'

'Good. Then we may be able to find out what happened to the others.'

'I still can't believe the Kinda were responsible. They really are culturally non-hostile.'

'Well there may be another reason for what's been happening.'

She looked curiously at him. 'Such as what?'

'Perhaps there's something else out there.'

Hindle stood nervously at attention in the corridor outside the airlock, awaiting the return of Sanders. He made desperate, unavailing attempts to tidy himself up, to adjust his uniform and flatten his hair.

Somewhere in his mind, Hindle knew that he had been behaving very badly indeed. When Sanders stepped out of the airlock, he had all his excuses ready.

'I can explain, sir,' said Hindle feverishly. 'The boy Adric was unreliable, as you suspected. You did suspect, didn't you sir? Doctor Todd has also proved to be unreliable. Discipline has to be maintained, to a degree, sir...'

Suddenly Hindle became aware that Sanders was not red-faced with anger, not shouting at him, not demanding explanations and threatening punishments.

Instead, Sanders was just standing there, smiling benevolently, clutching a small carved wooden box.

Like Hindle, a few minutes earlier, Sanders had become a child. Not an angry, tearful child however, but a calm, placid, happy one. He beamed at Hindle and held out the box.

Hello,' he said simply. 'Look! I've brought you a present!'

Hindle was astonished. 'What?'

'A present.' Again, he offered the box.

'What is it?'

Sanders smiled beatifically. 'Open it and see. I did.'

Hindle gave him a suspicious look. Even in his own unstable state, he sensed that something very odd indeed had happened to his superior officer. 'You did?'

'Yes. Go on, open it.'

Hindle studied the box warily. 'I don't think I will. Not just now.'

'As you like,' said Sanders happily. 'You know best.'

Hindle stared at him.

There was no doubt about it, Sanders had definitely changed.

'Think about it,' said the Doctor. 'If the Kinda are far more sophisticated than they appear, isn't it possible that their enemies are as well?'

'Enemies we still haven't seen, you mean?' asked Doctor Todd.

The Doctor nodded. 'Perhaps.'

‘You know, Doctor, you’re frightening me!’

Hindle appeared in the doorway. ‘Mr Sanders has returned.’

She turned. ‘Good. Perhaps now things will get back to normal around here.’

At the first sight of Sanders, it was very clear that things were far from normal.

He advanced almost hesitantly into the room, looking round like a very shy child at a party, not sure of its welcome.

‘He’s brought me a present,’ said Hindle proudly.

‘Haven’t you Mr Sanders?’

‘Yes. Yes, I have.’

Sanders looked around the room, smiling happily, then turned back to Hindle. ‘Please – can I sit down?’

Tegan, or rather the creature inhabiting Tegan’s body, sat crouched in a fork of the branches of a tree, close by the wind-chimes. She looked down as Aris came forlornly into the clearing. He sat beneath the tree, gazing at the wind-chimes as if in search of inspiration.

The Mara inside Tegan was quite unmoved by the sight of Aris’s evident misery.

The Mara *liked* misery.

It enjoyed pain and suffering of all kinds, and tried to create as much of them as possible.

Tegan plucked an apple from the tree and dropped it close to Aris. He paid it no attention.

Tegan dropped another apple and then another.

Finally, she *threw* an apple, hard, striking Aris on the head. He looked up.

‘Boo" she shouted.

Aris’s eyes widened.

This must be another of the Wise Women. She had Voice.

Aris bowed his head.

Hindle turned the little wooden box round and round in his hands, wanting very much to open it, and yet somehow not daring to take the risk. ‘What is it?’

Sanders gave a secret smile. ‘Open it and see.’

‘Why should I?’

‘Because then you’ll understand everything.’

‘I don’t want to understand everything, just like that,’

said Hindle crossly. ‘I want to find out for myself!’

‘Oh please,’ said Sanders. ‘Do open it. Go on.’

Hindle considered.

‘Look,’ said Doctor Todd.

‘Silence,’ shouted Hindle automatically.

Sanders’ strange meekness had resulted in the return of Hindle’s dictatorial manner.

He returned his attention to the mysterious box.

‘It won’t bite you,’ said Sanders cajolingly.

‘What won’t?’

‘What?’ Sanders was baffled.

‘The thing in the box... Has it got teeth?’

‘No.’

‘Fangs then? Claws?’

‘No.’

‘A fiery raking tongue, licking you all over? Urrgh!’

‘No, no, no!’ said Sanders impatiently.

‘Silence!’ shrieked Hindle. ‘I’m in charge here now, old man. I’ll decide what’s to be done.’

Tegan sat on her tree branch, swinging her legs and staring down at Aris, who looked worshipfully up at her.

‘Don’t say much, do you?’ said Tegan in her new, harsh voice. ‘I was forgetting, we haven’t been introduced, have we?’

Aris went on staring upwards.

Tegan laughed. ‘But then, I was forgetting something else... You don’t speak, do you?’

She laughed again, but there was no mirth in the sound.

‘I’m not surprised, you look so sad. Telepathy is a very boring way to communicate.’

Tegan dropped nimbly to the ground, and stood before Aris, examining him with idle curiosity. ‘Such a strange creature.’

Aris held out his hands beseechingly, as he had done with the Two Wise Women, Panna and Karuna.

Tegan cocked her head. ‘Something to say, is that it?’

She touched his hands and there was a brief flow of communication between them.

Tegan or rather the Mara in Tegan’s body, stood considering for a moment, trying to make sense of the confused jumble of feelings, thoughts and impressions that crowded Aris’s mind.

The Mara laughed. There was opportunity here, opportunity for mischief, a chance to cause pain, to spread death and destruction. How fortunate!

With mock concern Tegan said, ‘You are unhappy. Very unhappy. Perhaps I can help you. We can free your brother from the Dome.’

She held out her hands, so that Aris could touch them.

‘Would you like that? You would? Yes, I thought you might! With my help, you could launch an attack. Destroy the people who hold your brother prisoner. Yes, you’re right, Aris. The people in the Dome *are* evil. They must be destroyed!’

She gripped his wrists and leaned forwards, staring into his face with glowing eyes. ‘With my help, Aris, you could become all powerful. I am the Mara!’

Terrified, Aris tried to pull away.

‘Do not resist me, Aris. I am your strength.’

The snake on Tegan’s arm began to pulse, and then it *flowed* – onto the arm of Aris.

The discarded body of Tegan crumpled to the ground.

For the first time in his life, Aris spoke. ‘All things are possible. All things!’

He threw back his head and laughed – the harsh and terrible laughter of the Mara.

With a madman’s ingenuity, Hindle had worked out a way of dealing with the problem posed by the box.

The Doctor, Sanders, Doctor Todd and the box itself had all been despatched to the cage under the care of the Kinda guards.

Now Hindle stood by the desk-monitor, shouting instructions. ‘Hurry up. Put them all in the cage, and the box on the floor between them. Now, come outside and lock the door. Hurry up now. That’s right. Now come back here.’

Apparently forgotten, Adric stood beside Hindle at the desk. Just why he hadn’t been sent to the cage with the others he had no idea. Maybe, somewhere in Hindle’s confused mind, they were allies again. Whatever the reason, Adric wasn’t complaining.

His plan, if you could call it that was simple. He would keep in with Hindle, keep out of the way, and await his chance to escape.

The Doctor, Sanders, and Doctor Todd were sitting on the floor of the cage.

‘Listen, Sanders,’ said the Doctor urgently. ‘Where did you get the box?’

‘What?’ said Sanders vaguely. ‘The box? Oh, it was given to me...’

‘Yes, we know, but by whom?’

‘Oh... someone.’

Doctor Todd looked apprehensively at the box. ‘There could be anything in it. Anything.’

‘Yes, I know,’ said the Doctor softly. ‘Mr Sanders, do *you* know what’s in the box?’

‘I... No. I can’t remember.’

Hindle’s voice blared from the speaker. ‘You! You in there!’

The Doctor looked up at the spy-camera.

‘You, Doctor,’ shouted the voice. ‘Open the box.’

‘I really don’t think that would be very wise.’

‘Open it!’

‘You’re mad, Hindle,’ shouted Doctor Todd. ‘We don’t know what’s in there.’

‘Then open it and find out!’

‘It could be very dangerous,’ called the Doctor.

Hindle was determined. ‘Open it. Open it at once, or I’ll send the Kinda to shoot you.’

The Doctor frowned. Somehow Hindle had managed to achieve total control over the two Kinda. If he ordered them to fire, the Kinda would kill all three of them immediately.

The Doctor picked up the box.

‘Don’t whispered Doctor Todd. ‘You don’t know what’s in there. It could kill us all.’

‘That’s very true,’ said the Doctor. ‘Unfortunately, so could Hindle. And unless I do as he orders, he will!’

He started to open the box.

‘No!’ screamed Doctor Todd. ‘No, don’t!’

The Doctor looked at the box. After all, he thought, it was the possibility of death against the virtual certainty.

Better to take what chance there was, however slight.

He opened the box.

## The Vision

The box opened.

A jack-in-the-box sprang out.

Its head, a miniature version of a Kinda devil mask, wobbled to and fro grinning at them.

Sanders was roaring with laughter, and the others were laughing too, though largely from relief.

Doctor Todd took the doll from out of the box. ‘Oh, is that all?’ she said delightedly.

The Doctor smiled. ‘Well, at least we’ve established one thing.’

‘What’s that?’

‘The Kinda have a sense of humour.’

Hindle’s frantic voice blared from the speaker. ‘What’s so funny? What’s happening?’

‘Absolutely nothing,’ said the Doctor cheerfully. He paused for a moment. ‘Wait!’

A sound was coming from the open box.

A single pure, high note that changed to strange, eerie wailing music, oddly reminiscent of the sound made by the wind-chimes.

All the electric power in the Dome faltered and died.

The lights went out, leaving the laboratory lit only by the shaft of sunshine that streamed through the window. The door to the cage clicked open.

The spy-camera cut out.

‘I don’t believe it,’ said Doctor Todd softly. ‘This is impossible.’ Her voice trailed away, and she sat staring into the distance.

The Doctor, meanwhile, was staring raptly into the darkness of the empty box.

He saw the jungle, mile upon mile of waving green vegetation.

He saw a group of Kinda gathering fruits.

He saw a woman carrying a baby at her breast. There was a white-haired old woman, incredibly old, beckoning from the mouth of a cave.

There was a young girl with her. She too was beckoning.

Both of them, the old woman and the young girl, standing in the cave mouth, calling him... He had to go to them. The music faded and the Doctor awoke. He looked round and saw that his companions were awakening too.

Sanders was overwhelmed, his face buried in his hands.

Doctor Todd looked rapt, transfigured.

‘I think it’s safe to assume we all three had roughly the same experience,’ said the Doctor. He looked at Doctor Todd. ‘How do you feel?’

‘Fine. Just fine.’

‘Not – different, in any way?’

‘No. What happened?’

‘Somehow the box linked us up with the Kinda... We were seeing the world through their eyes.’

She looked at Sanders who was sobbing quietly. ‘It certainly affected him.’

The Doctor nodded. With a personality as rigid as Sanders', any kind of mystic experience was bound to have a shattering effect. And to undergo it twice... Somehow the layers of Sanders' personality had been peeled away, leaving a defenceless child. 'Shock. He'll be all right.' The Doctor jumped to his feet. 'Come on.'

'Where?'

'You were quite right, Doctor Todd, this is not a planet of primitives. The answers we need are out there, in the jungle.' He nodded towards the open door. 'Come on.

Leave the box here.'

They hurried away, out of the laboratory and down the corridor that led to the airlock.

The door to the main room was closed and from behind it came the sound of banging, and Hindle's frantic voice.

'Turn the light on! Turn the light on, *please*...'

The Doctor realised that since the main room had been illuminated only by artificial light, it must now be in pitch darkness – a terrifying experience for poor Hindle.

The Doctor headed for the airlock door.

Doctor Todd said, 'What about your friend Adric?'

'He'll be all right,' said the Doctor. 'Adric's very resourceful.'

The lights began flickering on again.

'Quickly,' shouted the Doctor. 'The power's coming back! Jump for it!'

They made it through the airlock door just in time.

Once outside the Dome, there was nothing but jungle all around them.

'Which way?' asked Doctor Todd.

The Doctor looked round, realising he hadn't slightest idea. 'Has anyone ever told you you ask a lot of questions?'

'It's my training, Doctor. I'm a scientist.'

'Yes, so you are.' The Doctor pointed, more or less at random. 'It's this way.'

'Are you sure?'

'Come *on*,' said the Doctor, and grabbing her hand he dragged her away.

Tegan sat cross-legged beneath the wind-chimes, gazing blankly into space. Nearby, Aris was exerting all his strength to rip a heavy branch from a tree. With a final grunt of effort he ripped it free. He began stripping the stems and foliage from the main shaft. He was left with a long and heavy spear, the splintered end providing a crude point.

Now, for the first time, there was a weapon made in the land of the Kinda.

Aris looked at the snake mark on his arm. Stooping down, he snatched up a trailing length of creeper and wrapped it around his forearm. Hefting the spear in his hand, Aris hurried away.

The Doctor and his companion reached a sort of jungle cross-roads, a place where two trails crossed.

'Which way now?' asked Doctor Todd.

The Doctor looked at her. 'Yes.'

'Yes, what?'

'Yes, you're quite right. We're lost.'

‘Where, precisely, were we heading in the first place?’

‘To the cave in the dream.’

‘You’re sure it actually exists? It’s a real place?’

‘Oh, absolutely!’

‘So – where do we go from here?’

The Doctor took Adric’s coin from his pocket. ‘Tell you what, we’ll toss for it!’ He pointed. ‘Heads this way, tails that.’ He tossed the coin, calling out while it was still in the air. ‘Heads!’

‘Tails!’ shouted Doctor Todd.

‘What?’ Distracted, the Doctor dropped the coin. He picked it up and looked at it. ‘You win. Tails. This way!’

They hurried on.

Hindle was hunched in his swivel chair, studying something on his lap. The chair was facing the monitor screen, which meant Hindle had his back to Adric, the two Kinda, and Sanders, who stood meekly between them.

I’ve found Mr Sanders, sir,’ said Adric in brisk military tones. ‘The other two must have left him behind.’ He paused. ‘I’ve also found the box.’

‘I don’t want to see it,’ said Hindle sulkily.

Adric put the box on the table. ‘Sir, I could always go and look for them... if I had your permission.’

‘Not – Outside?’ said Hindle in horrified tones.

Adric hadn’t really expected to get away with it. ‘No, of course not. Not unless you thought...’

Hindle swung round, revealing an enormous plastic-bound book open on his lap. He tapped it. It’s all in here, you know Adric. *Everything*. You just have to know where to look.’

I’m sorry,’ said Adric, ‘I really don’t know what you’re -

’ ‘Silence,’ said Hindle, quietly for once. ‘Listen.’

Adric opened his mouth to speak, and Sanders gave him a reproving look. ‘Shush!’

‘You too, old man,’ said Hindle not unkindly. ‘Now *listen*, both of you,’ He began reading from the book.

"‘Emergency, Class Five (b). If, in the opinion of the Officer designated I/C Security, a situation should develop where a threat to the territorial integrity of the Dome will, could or might extend to a threat to the security of Homeworld itself, then Emergency Class Five (b) shall be declared. The Procedure Implementation Immediate, shall be in two phases.’ He paused impressively. "‘Phase One.

The preparation, priming and location of explosive devices, sufficient to render the Dome and its constituents to their base chemical constituents. Phase Two...’

Adric stared at him. ‘You’re not seriously suggesting - ’

Hindle looked up from the Manual, eyes glittering feverishly. ‘But don’t you see? We’d be *safe* then, forever and ever. The outside will never get in. Don’t you see?’

Adric did see, though he still couldn’t quite believe it.

Hindle proposed to destroy the Dome, with everything, and everyone in it. His solution to all their problems, the famous Emergency Class Five (b) Procedure was nothing more nor less than a suicide pact.

Doctor Todd was worried.

There was rustling in the Jungle. It seemed to move with them as they hurried along the narrow track. If they stopped, *it* stopped.

'Doctor,' she whispered. 'There's something following us.'

'Nonsense,' said the Doctor vigorously.

He came to a sudden halt – and this time the rustling didn't quite stop in time. 'You're right. There's something following us!'

A head popped out of the bushes, and Doctor Todd jumped hack with alarm. It wasn't a human head.

It was the head of a very large doll, carved from wood and decorated with twigs and bark and cloth. It looked rather like a more cheerful version of one of the Kinda devil masks.

The head grinned at them for a moment, then it was joined by another head.

This one was human. It belonged to the man carrying the Doll. He had a thin, comically expressive face and he was dressed in a strange costume of bark and twigs and cloth, that gave him an obviously intentional resemblance to his own Doll.

For a moment the two heads stared in astonishment at the Doctor and his companion.

'It's Trickster,' whispered Doctor Todd.

'Who?'

'Trickster. A symbolic figure from Kinda ritual.'

Trickster and his Doll turned and looked wonderingly at each other, as if unable to believe their eyes.

They looked back at the Doctor, and nodded slowly.

Yes, he was really there! They popped back out of sight.

The Kinda came out of the jungle all around them, Kinda of all ages, young and old, grown men and women and children, even babies in arms.

Doctor Todd was looking around in amazement. 'I've never seen so many of them. They usually only associate in groups of three and four.'

Suddenly Trickster reappeared, leaping out onto the path in front of them.

He was poised to attack, knees bent, Doll brandished like a weapon. The effect was totally ludicrous, particularly since he was facing the wrong way, and had his back to them. Trickster mimed astonishment peering warily to and fro. Where had the enemy gone? Not left, not right... He held a whispered conference with the Doll, and peered cautiously over his shoulder.

Aha! There they were!

Trickster whirled round, and resuming his warrior pose, he crept stealthily forward as if to attack.

Doctor Todd was getting worried, 'Doctor,' she whispered.

The Doctor smiled. 'Don't worry. Culturally non-hostile, didn't you say?'

Trickster came closer, closer, poised to spring – and found that one of his legs was caught in some invisible mud. Still trying to keep up his menacing pose, he tugged worriedly at the trapped foot, heaved wildly, shot forwards, tripped and landed flat on his face at the Doctor's feet.

Stretching out his hand, the Doctor helped Trickster rise.

Trickster thrust his head forward, staring at them. He moved a spread palm up and down before his own face, in the children's trick of wiping different expressions

on and off... Anger, puzzlement, blankness, astonishment, and finally smiling friendliness chased themselves on and off his features.

The Doctor grinned. ‘Yes, yes... We take the point, don’t we?’

‘Yes, of course. The clown or jester is a familiar figure, anthropologically speaking. He diffuses potential sources of conflict through mockery and ridicule.’ Doctor Todd smiled at Trickster. ‘Don’t you?’

Somewhat astonished at being directly addressed, Trickster and his Doll looked enquiringly at each other.

Trickster nodded politely. The Doll shook its head with equal vigour.

Trickster smiled and bowed. Stepping back with an expansive gesture, he looked expectantly at the Doctor.

The Doctor looked puzzled.

Doctor Todd nudged him in the ribs. ‘I think it’s your turn!’

The Doctor scratched his head. ‘Well, I don’t know what I can – ah, wait a minute!’

He fished out Adric’s coin from his pocket and showed it to Trickster, who nodded attentively. Changing the coin from hand to hand the Doctor suddenly closed his fists, holding them out to Trickster, indicating that he should choose.

The Kinda crowded round.

Trickster made a great show of indecision, and earnest consideration. Should he choose left? No, right? No perhaps left after all.

Trickster touched the Doctor’s left fist.

The Doctor opened it. It was empty.

Trickster tapped the right fist – and was astonished to discover that was empty too.

The Doctor reached out and took the coin from behind Trickster’s ear.

Trickster registered total astonishment, and the Doll peered behind both his ears, looking for more coins.

The watching Kinda were smiling broadly, clapping their hands in admiration.

‘Well done, Doctor,’ said Doctor Todd.

‘Oh it’s all quite simple really,’ said the Doctor –

secretly delighted to have done the trick so perfectly. ‘Just a matter of practice.’ He grinned mischieviously at her.

‘Your turn!’

Before she could answer a harsh voice bellowed, ‘Stop!’

Another Kinda had appeared from the jungle.

His face was a mask of hatred, and he carried a massive sharpened stake. The Doctor noticed that the stranger had vine-leaves wrapped round his right forearm. They seemed to be covering some sort of design or tattoo.

Like Trickster a few moments ago, the warrior stood poised to attack. But something told the Doctor this was no joke. This was deadly serious.

‘Seize them!’ roared the stranger. ‘Seize the Not-We and destroy them.’

## The Dream Cave

The Doctor looked at the newcomer. ‘I rather think he means us.’

‘Undoubtedly. The Kinda call themselves the Among-We. Any strangers are automatically Not-We.’

‘I thought you said the Kinda have no voice?’

‘They don’t.’

‘Well, he certainly seems to have plenty.’

‘The Not-We must be killed,’ bellowed the strange warrior.

‘Look at the Kinda,’ whispered Doctor Todd. ‘They’re as surprised as we are.’

And indeed, far from rallying to the stranger’s war-cry, the Kinda were reacting with astonishment, almost with horror.

A young girl stepped forward from amongst the Kinda.

‘Aris!’ she called.

‘That’s the girl,’ said the Doctor urgently. ‘The girl I saw in my dreams!’

‘The Not-We must be destroyed,’ shouted the warrior again...

‘Aris, you have Voice,’ said the girl. ‘How can this be? I must read your mind.’

‘No,’ snarled Aris. ‘It is *forbidden*! Leave me.’

An older woman came forward and touched the girl’s shoulder, the girl stared intently at her, reading the thought in her mind. ‘Yes... perhaps it is so. The Prophecy.’

The Doctor came to join them. ‘Prophecy? What Prophecy.’

‘The Prophecy teaches that at the Beginnings of Things when the Not-We are come, a Man will arise who has the gift of Voice, and must be obeyed.’

The stranger listened eagerly to her words. Somehow the Doctor formed the impression that the actual Prophecy was as new to him as it had been to the Doctor himself.

The stranger raised his voice in a shout. ‘You hear her?

I am the Man. I have Voice. Obey me! Seize the Not-We and kill them!’

‘No!’ shouted the girl. ‘Wait. We do not yet know what is right. Only the Wise Woman knows. Aris has been sick with grief for his brother. Perhaps it is the sickness that speaks. The Wise Woman told me to bring these Not-We to the Cave of Dreaming, and this I must do.’ She tugged at the Doctor’s sleeve. ‘Quickly, follow me!’

The Doctor looked at the menacing figure with the spear and said, ‘Gladly!’

‘Stop.’ shouted Aris. ‘Stop them!’

The Kinda crowded round him, hindering more than helping.

The Doctor and his two companions disappeared into the jungle.

Flanked by the Kinda guards, Hindle sat in his command chair. Sanders was crouched at his feet, completing the assembly of a complicated-looking piece of equipment enclosed in a simple black box. As far as Adric could make out, the whole thing was some kind of remote control device.

Sanders stood up and closed the box, handing it to Hindle. There was a large control-button set into the lid.

‘There, that should do it.’

Hindle examined the box delightedly. ‘Are you sure?’

‘Oh yes. You see, the Master Detonator, which is what you’ve got there, will trigger six explosive charges placed in a pattern of two overlapping equilateral triangles on the Dome Wall. That way, you’re guaranteed to ZMI.’

Adric was baffled. ‘ZMI?’

‘Zone of Maximum Impact,’ explained Hindle. He beamed. ‘Which will, in fact, be right here in this room.

Won’t it old man?’

‘Yes, or more accurately still...’

Hindle leaned forward eagerly. ‘Yes?’

‘Yes about where you’re sitting!’

‘Excellent! That’ll surprise them, won’t it Adric?’

‘Surprise who?’

‘Everyone!’ said Hindle impressively. ‘If anybody, anything, at any time tries to get into this Dome... Boom!

We blow ourselves to bits. Perfect defence!’

Sanders nodded cheerfully. ‘Yes, that’s it. Boom! Of course, the TAD is a little more difficult to estimate.

Perhaps about thirty miles.’

‘TAD,’ said Adric. ‘No, don’t tell me.’ He was getting the hang of their appalling military jargon now. ‘Total Area of – Devastation?’

‘Quite right,’ said Sanders approvingly. ‘Well done!’ He looked at Hindle. ‘Where do you want this?’

‘Put it on that console, over there.’

Sanders put the switch down and at a gesture from Hindle, one of the Kinda guards went and stood guard over it.

Hindle leaped to attention, addressing some unseen higher authority. ‘I wish to announce that Phase (5b) Defence of the Dome, is now complete!’

Adric looked unbelievingly at him. ‘What now?’

Hindle gave a sigh of pleasure. ‘’Now? Well, now we can enjoy ourselves. We can relax!’

Adric looked at the Master Detonator guarded by the impassive Kinda.

He had never felt less relaxed in all his life.

The girl bustled them along the forest path at a tremendous rate, moving so quickly that they had difficulty in keeping up.

‘Hang on a minute,’ called the Doctor. ‘You, what’s your name?’

‘I am called Karuna.’

‘Well, Karuna, where are we going? I expect you know these woods backwards, but all the same...’ A sudden thought struck him. ‘I don’t suppose you’ve come across another stranger, a young woman?’

‘A Not-We woman with auburn hair?’

‘Yes, that’s right. Her name is Tegan.’

‘We have seen her.’

‘Where? Where is she now?’

‘She was seen at the Place of Great Dreaming...’

‘Is it far from here?’

‘I will take you there, later. Now we must go to the Cave.

Come!' She hurried on.

'This person, Aris, Karuna?'

The girl answered without slowing down. 'Yes?'

'You said he has been sick?'

'His brother was a prisoner of the Not-We in the Dome, and this has darkened Aris's mind.'

'All the same, Aris can speak now. He has Voice.'

'As you heard.'

'Yes, but so do you – have Voice I mean. How is it that you can speak?'

Karuna spoke like someone explaining something very elementary to a rather dim child. 'Aris is a male, and males do not speak. Panna will explain.'

'Panna?'

'She is the Wise Woman.'

The Doctor shook his head. It was hard to take in the subtle complexities of an alien culture, particularly when you were being led through the jungle at a run. 'This Aris, so you know him well?'

'Of couse. Aris is one of my fathers.'

'One of them? How many do you have?'

'Seven,' said Karuna prosaically.

'Seven? Isn't that rather extravagant?'

Karuna was surprised. 'Why. How many fathers do the Not-We have?'

'Well, on the whole, one!'

'Only one? That is very sad.'

'So many questions, Doctor?' said Doctor Todd teasingly.

They hurried on their way.

Sanders came into the main room of the Dome with a huge, empty cardboard box, and set it down in the middle of the floor. 'There! That is the biggest one I can find.'

There were cardboard boxes everywhere, of every shape and size, gathered from the storage areas of the Dome.

Hindle rubbed his hands. 'Right! Come on Adric, let's get started then.'

'No. I don't want to play.'

Hindle was both hurt and astonished. 'Why ever not?

We're going to build a city, Adric.'

'I don't want to play,' repeated Adric.

'Why not?'

'Because I don't want to. It's childish.'

'Oh, go on,' pleaded Hindle. 'It isn't just a game, it's real. We're going to do measuring and everything.'

'No.'

Hindle looked at Sanders. 'You tell him.'

Sanders sighed. 'Well, if he really doesn't want to play...'

Hindle pouted. 'Who's in charge here?'

'Oh, you are of course.'

'Right!' Hindle pointed dramatically at the Kinda by the Master Detonator. 'One word from me... One word!'

'I'll help you,' said Sanders eagerly. 'I want to play.'

'You, old man?'

‘I’d like to – really.’

Hindle looked suspiciously at him. ‘I’d still give the orders?’

‘Oh yes, of course.’

‘All right, then. Let’s get started.’

They set to work, measuring the floor space while Adric looked on despairingly.

Both men seemed to have reverted to a kind of second childhood, Hindle bossy and domineering, Sanders mild and easy-going. Unfortunately, Sanders now seemed to have very little will of his own and it was the hysterical, paranoid personality of Hindle which dominated.

Adric looked worriedly at the Master Detonator, with its Kinda guardian. One word from Hindle and they would all be blown to bits! And Hindle was unstable enough to give that order at any time.

They had reached the cave at last.

There was nothing particularly special about it. It was just a cave, set into a rock face.

‘Panna!’ called Karuna. ‘Panna, we are here!’ The Doctor looked at the cave. It was exactly as he had seen it in his waking dream, after the opening of the box.

‘Such stuff as dreams are made of...’

Karuna called again. ‘Panna? Are you there?’

An old voice said crossly. ‘Of course I am here. Where else should I be?’

Karuna led them forward, and the Doctor saw an incredibly old woman with snow-white hair and a wrinkled brown face sitting in the shadowy cave mouth. It did not surprise him in the least to see that she was the old woman in his dream.

Karuna hurried into the cave, helped the old woman to her feet and led her towards them. The Doctor realised that the old woman was blind.

‘Well,’ she said querulously. ‘Did you bring the Not-We woman from the Dome?’

‘She is here, Panna.’

‘Where is she? Let me feel her face.’

Karuna took Panna’s hand and guided it towards Doctor Todd’s face.

The wrinkled old hand brushed lightly over her features. ‘You are welcome.’

‘Thank you.’

Karuna said, ‘There is another here, Panna.’

‘Another? What other?’

‘Er, me,’ said the Doctor diffidently. ‘Hello!’

Panna’s head turned in the direction of his voice. ‘A man? Why did you bring him here?’

‘He was with the Not-We woman.’

‘Was he present when the box was opened?’

The Doctor answered for himself. ‘Oh yes. It was most enlightening.’

Old Panna scowled. ‘What is he babbling about? No male can open the Box of Jhana without being driven out of his mind... It is well known...’ she paused. ‘Unless of course... is he an idiot?’

Doctor Todd smiled. ‘I’m not sure. Are you an idiot, Doctor?’

‘I suppose I must be. I’ve certainly been called one often enough.’

‘Be silent, idiot,’ said Panna sternly.

‘Yes, of course,’ said the Doctor humbly.

Panna turned to Karuna. ‘You are agitated, child. Tell me what has happened.’

Sanders and Hindle were pushing furniture back to the edge of the room, extending the size of their play area.

‘We could cover the whole floor,’ said Hindle excitedly.

Sanders’ eyes were shining with excitement. ‘Yes, let’s!’

‘And every detail must be perfect.’

‘Oh yes, yes of course.’

Adric began sidling towards the door, but Hindle spotted him from the corner of his eye. ‘Adric, where are you going?’

‘Oh, I just thought I might as well go for a little stroll. I mean, as you’re so busy...’

Hindle rose and looked sternly at him. ‘Well? Haven’t you forgotten something?’

‘No, what?’

‘First you have to ask my permission.’

‘Sorry. *Please* may I go for a stroll?’

‘No,’ said Hindle pettishly. ‘No you can’t. You’ve made me angry now.’

‘So,’ said Panna thoughtfully. ‘Aris has found Voice. And so soon.’

‘The others will follow him,’ said Karuna sadly.

Panna nodded. ‘It is all beginning again.’

‘What is?’ asked the Doctor.

‘What is? What is?’ mocked Old Panna. ‘ *History* is, you male fool. History is. Time is. Once again, the great Wheel will begin to roll downhill, gathering speed, through the centuries, crushing everything in its path. Unstoppable –

until once again...’ Her voice trailed away.

‘Until?’ prompted Doctor Todd gently.

‘I must show you. That is why you have been brought here. Then perhaps, when you understand, you will go away and leave us in peace – if it is not already too late.’

The Doctor said, ‘Once again? You said once again.’

‘Of course. Wheel turns, civilisations rise, Wheel turns, civilisations fall.’

‘And I suppose this happens many times?’

Old Panna was losing patience. ‘Of course. Whenever the Wheel turns, there is suffering, delusion and death.

That much should be clear, even to an idiot. Now stop babbling, we must get ready. Be seated, all of you.’

Stiffly, old Panna sank cross-legged to the ground. The Doctor and Doctor Todd did the same.

‘Are they seated?’ snapped Panna.

Karuna came to join them. ‘Yes.’

Panna began to sway to and fro, muttering to herself.

‘Aaah, Wheel turns... Wheel turns...’

A harsh bellow came from outside the cave, shattering her concentration. ‘Old woman!’

Karuna jumped up and looked out. ‘It is Aris!’

Panna struggled to her feet. ‘Quickly child, help me. He must not be allowed to interfere. You, Not-We woman!

You will stay here – with the idiot!’

Assisted by Karuna, Panna hobbled rapidly from the cave.

The Doctor jumped to his feet, and peered cautiously from the cave mouth. Aris was standing there, accompanied by a little group of male Kinda. They were all carrying spears.

**9**

## The Wheel Turns

Sanders and Hindle were on their knees, surrounded by an incredible number of pieces of different sizes of cardboard, carefully cut to size, in accordance with a series of mysterious and complicated measurements carried out earlier. Now, with the aid of pencils, string and tape, they, were completing a kind of ground plan.

Both were totally absorbed in what they were doing –

too absorbed to notice that Adric was once more sidling towards the door. This time he made it.

He slipped through the door unnoticed, just as Hindle sat back on his heels and said, 'There, that's it! perfect!'

'Perfect!' echoed Sanders happily.

Without turning round, Hindle asked. 'What do you think, Adric?'

Naturally enough, there was no reply.

Both turned, and realised that Adric was gone. Sanders got up. 'I'll go and find him.'

Hindle jumped to his feet. 'Wait. I'm in charge here, old man, I'll decide what has to be done.'

Sanders sprang to attention. 'Yes sir. Sorry sir. What shall I do?'

Hindle considered. 'Just you go off and find him.'

Happily, Sanders went off to look for Adric.

Hindle sighed. 'Why can't we all just play the game together?'

Supported by Karuna, old Panna hobbled towards the little group of armed men.

Watching from the cave mouth, the Doctor saw that even Trickster was there. He was unarmed but his Doll held a tiny spear.

Panna came up to Aris, who stood a little ahead of his followers. 'What do you want?'

'Listen to me, old woman,' said the harsh grating voice.

'No! You listen to me – all of you!'

'I have Voice,' roared Aris. 'They know the Prophecy.

Now they listen only to me.'

Panna turned to Karuna. 'Is this true, child? Quickly, read them.'

Karuna tried to scan the minds of the crowd, and then turned away distressed. 'No, I cannot. It... hurts.'

'I must know, child. Tell me what is in their minds.'

Reluctantly Karuna tried again. After a moment she whispered,

'"Obedience... Obedience... Obedience...

Obedience..."'

'Stop,' muttered Panna. 'I have heard enough.'

The minds of the Kinda were completely under Aris's control.

Aris dew himself up. 'Come here, Karuna.'

'Karuna! Stay where you are,' ordered Panna.

Slowly, reluctantly, as if drawn by some hypnotic power, Karuna crossed to stand by Aris.

'Where are you, child?' called Panna. 'Karuna, please!'

Karuna did not move.

Aris threw back his head and laughed. ‘We shall destroy the Dome. The Not-We must all be killed. That is our duty.’

Panna’s voice was bleak and despairing. ‘You fool. You blind fool. That is how it begins again. With killing. But it does not end there. It ends, as it has always done, in chaos and despair. It ends, as it begins, in *darkness*.’ She raised her voice. ‘Is that what you want, all of you?’

Again Aris laughed, a harsh and terrible laugh.

Panna stared at him, suddenly horrified. ‘Who are you?’

‘I am Aris, he who speaks!’

‘No,’ she said slowly. ‘You are not Aris. You are...

something else.’

From the cave mouth the Doctor saw Aris pull up the wreath of vines that covered his right arm. There was something beneath it...

‘Silence, old woman,’ shouted Aris. He turned to his followers. ‘To the Dome!’ They began to move away.

‘Be sure I shall return!’

He strode after his warriors.

Doctor Todd hurried out of the cave. ‘Quickly! We must go and warn the Dome.’

‘No,’ said Panna sharply. ‘Your place is here.’

‘Panna, there was something on his arm,’ said the Doctor. ‘Some kind of design. He was trying to hide it.’

‘The sign of the snake.’

‘That’s right! It looked like a snake, coiling up his arm.’

‘It is the mark of the Mara. The Evil Ones.’

Doctor Todd said, ‘I really think we should go and warn

– ‘ The Doctor ignored her. ‘What do you know of the Mara, Panna?’

The old voice was filled with despair. ‘It is the Mara who turn the Wheel. The Mara who dance to the music of our despair. Our suffering is the Mara’s delight, out madness their meat and drink. And now the Mara has returned.’

‘I too have heard the legends of the Mara.’

Panna staggered. ‘Help me.’

The Doctor helped her to hobble back to the cave.

Doctor Todd was still worrying about the fate of the Dome. ‘We’re wasting time.’

‘You are right,’ said Panna. ‘We must proceed at once.

Sit down.’

‘That’s not what I meant.’

‘Listen to me, Not-We woman. I must show you. You cannot help your friends without understanding. Now, sit!’

‘Do as she says,’ said the Doctor quietly.

The old woman sat cross-legged, her back to the cave mouth. The Doctor and Doctor Todd sat facing her, gazing out at the jungle.

Panna began rocking to and fro, crooning to herself.

‘Wheel turns... aah.. Wheel turns... aah...’

‘What’s she doing? What’s happening?’

‘Wait,’ said the Doctor quietly. ‘Just wait.’

Adric opened the inner door, and found himself facing the monstrous armoured bulk of the TSS.

It stood there, front hinged open, just as it had been when he and the Doctor had first found it empty in the jungle. Adric reached out and swung the door a little more open.

From somewhere behind him a voice called, 'Adric!'

Swiftly Adric pushed the TSS door to, though he took care not to close it completely, and turned. Sanders was hurrying towards him.

'There you are, Adric. You know, you really must try not to antagonise Mr Hindle.'

'I'm sorry.'

'Just play along with him son. He means well, really.'

Adric thought of the Master Detonator standing ready to blow up the Dome and everything around it. 'Does he?'

'Oh yes,' said Sanders in surprise. 'We all do, don't we, underneath it all?'

Putting a fatherly hand on Adric's shoulder, Sanders led him away.

'And now, the Mara turns the Wheel of Life,' crooned Panna. 'It ends as it began. Pass through... you must pass through...'

The Doctor looked past Panna's shoulder, at the vista of jungle framed in the cave mouth.

The reality of the jungle began to crack and peel away, until the mouth of the cave was filled with swirling, featureless greyness.

'Pass through,' mumbled Panna. 'Pass through.'

'We must do as she says,' said the Doctor. Climbing to his feet, he took his companion's hand and led her to the cave mouth.

Suddenly they were looking down as if from some vantage point.

They saw a little group of Kinda in a jungle clearing, confused and lost. Nearby, there stood a digital clock, on top of a column. It was registering 11.55. As they watched it clicked to 11.56...

They could see Panna standing beside the wind-chimes.

A fierce wind was blowing and the chimes rattled together, giving out their eerie music.

Sand was running from an hour-glass.

A metronome clicked remorselessly to and fro.

Shadows fell across a sundial.

They saw Panna by the wind-chimes.

The clock clicked. 11.57.

Image followed image in bewildering succession.

The frightened, confused Kinda milling to and fro.

The hour-glass.

The metronome.

The sundial.

The hour glass.

Time, thought the Doctor confusedly. Always Time.

Time running out.

The clock moved on. 11.58.

Then the Kinda again and there was Trickster in the centre of them. He was dancing, leaping, performing acrobatics. The Kinda smiled and applauded, and threw flowers.

Trickster redoubled his efforts. Suddenly he landed awkwardly, and crashed to the ground, twisting and writhing in obvious pain.

Doctor Todd said, ‘We must go and help him.’

The Doctor shook his head. ‘We can’t.’

The Kinda crowded round Trickster, but suddenly a fierce wind sprang up and they scattered helplessly.

Sand flowed from the hour-glass.

An alarm clock ticked.

A candle was flickering and burning low.

The digital clock read 11.59.

Panna stood by the wind-chimes.

The last few grains of sand trickled from the hour-glass.

The digital clock moved from 11.59 to 00.00.

The alarm clock reached 12 o’clock, and exploded in clangorous sound.

The sound of harsh, terrifying laughter blended with the roaring of the wind and the clamour of the alarm.

Panna stood by the wind-chimes, her hands stretched out despairingly...

She blurred and faded to nothingness.

‘What’s happening?’ shouted Doctor Todd.

‘It’s the end of everything,’ said the Doctor sadly.

Suddenly the Doctor and his companion were standing in the cave mouth, looking out at the the jungle. The Doctor drew a deep breath. ‘Did you recognise the laughter?’

‘Aris?’

‘No. The Mara within him.’

‘The Mara caused all that to happen?’

‘In a manner of speaking.’

‘Everything we just saw, Doctor – was it the future of the past?’

‘Both,’ said the Doctor unhelpfully. ‘Now we must get back to the Dome and stop the attack.’

‘We’ll never find our way through the jungle in time.’

‘The old woman will guide us.’

They turned to look at old Panna who was still sitting there, cross-legged and utterly still.

Doctor Todd went over to examine her.

She looked up. ‘Doctor – I think she’s dead!’

**10**

## The Path of the Mara

Confidently, belligerently, Aris led his little group of warriors towards the Dome. Amongst the little group were Trickster and the girl Karuna, both against their wills, both dominated by the power of the Mara that dwelt in Aris.

At the moment of Panna's death, Karuna changed. She stopped, staring into the distance. She drew herself up, turned, and strode away into the jungle. It was as if Aris no longer had any power over her.

Sadly, Trickster watched her go. He very much wanted to go with her, but the power of Aris's mind was too strong.

Clutching his Doll, Trickster trailed disconsolately after the others.

The Doctor knelt by Panna's body.

'In certain states of deep trance, the bodily functions slow down to such an effect that they are barely perceptible.' He felt for Panna's pulse. 'The mind is freed to use the kind of powers we have just seen. Theoretically, the body afterwards returns to normal. However in this case...' The Doctor stood up, shaking his head sadly.

'Perhaps she was just too old, too tired. The strain was too great.'

Karuna appeared in the cave mouth.

The Doctor looked up. 'Bad news, Karuna. Panna is dead.'

'Of course I'm not dead – idiot! Don't you know anything?'

The voice was Karuna's but the words and the personality behind them were Panna's.

Aris's Kinda warriors were gathering outside the Dome.

They hung back fearfully at the edge of the clearing, still a little overawed by the Dome's alien strangeness.

Aris stepped boldly forward. He strode up and down, every inch the fearless war leader.

Behind him, Trickster's Doll was mimicking his every movement.

The Kinda nudged each other, smiling. It was as if Aris's grip on their minds was beginning to relax.

Somehow, Aris sensed what was happening behind him.

He spun round, snatched the Doll from Trickster's hands, threw it upon the ground, and stamped it into matchwood.

The Kinda stood motionless, watching fearfully.

'Listen to me,' shouted Aris. 'The Dome *will* be destroyed. I can see it in my mind. We shall make it happen. Gather branches!'

The Kinda moved to obey.

Trickster was left staring down at the ruins of his Doll, his face filled with sadness.

He swept his hand upwards and suddenly the face was blank, emotionless.

Trickster would bide his time.

He trailed after the others.

Doctor Todd said unbelievingly, 'But it's impossible.'

'Well, unlikely perhaps.'

'It's ridiculous. If she is now Panna the Wise Woman as she claims – then where is the old Panna?'

Karuna looked at the Doctor. ‘Well, answer her – idiot!’

‘It’s a very good question – scientifically speaking,’ said the Doctor a little uneasily. ‘Where are you, Panna?’

Karuna said, ‘I am Panna. And I am here.’

‘Both of you?’

‘Of course. We are one.’

‘So, what you’re saying is, that when Panna died, her knowledge and experience were passed over to you?’

‘It is our way.’

Doctor Todd sighed, accepting the impossible. ‘That vision in the cave, Doctor, was it real or not?’

‘Did you see it?’

‘Yes, but...’

‘So did I!’

‘And so did I,’ said Karuna.

Or was it Panna?

The Doctor and Karuna smiled at each other, in perfect accord.

‘Look, *stop it*, both of you,’ said Doctor Todd angrily.

‘Believe it or not, I’m trying to understand, but it isn’t easy.’

‘I am sorry,’ said Karuna. ‘What do you wish to know?’

‘The vision was a prophecy, wasn’t it? A prophecy of what would happen here unless...’

‘Unless we can prevent the destruction of the Dome,’

concluded the Doctor.

‘And the Mara? What is it? Where does it come from?’

Karuna said, ‘The Mara inhabit the dark places of the Inside.’

‘You could call it Inner Space,’ said the Doctor. ‘Or another dimension. Somehow one of them has crossed over into this world and taken over the mind of Aris. One thing puzzles me, Karuna. *How* did it manage to cross over?’

‘There is only one path.’

‘And that is?’

‘The path of the Mara is opened by the dreaming of an unshared mind.’

In other words, thought the Doctor, the mind of a non-telepath. ‘Of course! Eureka! Tegan! You must take me to her, Karuna, right away.’

Hindle had switched off the monitor screen. Somehow the sight of the jungle pressing in on him interfered with his concentration on the game.

All the City needed now was its people.

Sanders was working on that, cutting out neat little cardboard men and women, carefully drawing on clothes and features with a marker pen.

Adric still had just one thought in his head – getting out of the Dome. These two madmen might have forgotten the Master Detonator but Adric hadn’t, not for one second.

Any threat to the Dome, real or imagined, would tip Hindle back into his paranoid state – which could mean the end for all of them.

Hindle finished his inspection of the City and came bustling over. ‘Are the people ready yet, old man?’

Sanders looked up. ‘Some of them.’

‘Oh good, let me see.’ Hindle picked up one of the complete figures. ‘Oh yes, they’re very good. Really, they are!’

Sanders was flattered. ‘Do you really think so?’

‘Oh yes. Aren’t they good, Adric?’

‘Wonderful,’ said Adric, not really looking. ‘Please, can I go for a walk?’

‘Not Outside,’ said Hindle sternly.

‘Oh no, of course not. Just – around.’

‘Outside is for grown-ups. It’s not for us, is it?’ Sanders looked up from his cardboard man. ‘Oh no, not for us.’

‘Soon it’ll all be finished,’ said Hindle. ‘The City, all the people, everything.’

Adric shot a quick look at the Kinda beside the Master Detonator. ‘And then what?’

For a moment, Hindle was confused. ‘And then? Well, we’ll live for ever and ever, won’t we?’

‘Look, I’m going anyway,’ said Adric defiantly.

Somewhat to his surprise no-one contradicted him. He slipped away.

Sanders and Hindle were still staring enraptured at their little cardboard figures.

‘Do you think they’ll be happy?’ asked Hindle wistfully.

‘I’ve done my best for them, haven’t I?’

‘Of course you have,’ said Sanders soothingly. He spoke to the little cardboard figure in his hands. ‘He has hasn’t he?’

‘I have, haven’t I?’ said Hindle solemnly. ‘My very best ever!’

Adric hurried down the corridor to the airlock, and pressed the button that opened the inner door. The door slid back, and he stared up at the TSS.

They found Tegan sitting cross-legged beneath the wind-chimes, sleeping peacefully.

‘Is she all right?’ asked Doctor Todd.

The Doctor said, ‘I hope so. What’s the function of the wind-chimes, Karuna?’

‘We use them in the Dreamings. The wind blows, the music comes and we share.’

‘Share what? Minds?’

‘Of course.’

‘And what would happen if one person dreamt here alone?’

‘That is forbidden. There are powers, waiting to be born, powers of great evil. There is much danger in dreaming alone.’

The Doctor looked down at Tegan. ‘I must wake her.’

‘That too has dangers,’ warned Karuna.

‘I must take the risk.’

The Doctor shook Tegan gently by the

shoulder, calling. ‘Tegan! Tegan, come on, wake up...’

Tegan opened her eyes. ‘Hello, Doctor! Where have you been?’

Under the direction of Aris, the Kinda were building a structure. It was made of saplings lashed together with vines, a sort of hollow giant, a framework with space for a man to stand inside. It was, in fact, a symbolic representation of the Total Survival Suit, the TSS.

Aris thought of the TSS as the Guardian of the Dome.

He had seen the TSS crashing through the jungle, and to his confused mind it was the symbol of all power, all strength. Now that he had a Guardian of his own,

he would be invincible. It was a delusion that the Mara was happy to encourage for purposes of its own.

Tegan rose and stretched. To the Doctor's great relief, she seemed perfectly normal and unharmed.

'How do you feel, Tegan. Are you all right?'

'Of course I am. I fell asleep that's all. I had the strangest dream.'

'What dream?'

'Dreams are private, Doctor.'

'Now come on Tegan, tell me.'

'No,' said Tegan firmly. 'It's private. Why all the fuss?.:.'

'Don't you realise you've been asleep for nearly two days?'

'What? What's going on here?' Tegan seemed to take in the presence of Karuna and Doctor Todd for the first time.

'Who are these people?'

'There's no time to explain now, Tegan,' said the Doctor firmly. 'Please, it's very important. You must tell me about your dream.'

Aris's Guardian was complete. It stood before the entrance to the Dome like some strange piece of abstract sculpture.

'Help me,' ordered Aris.

With due ceremony, he was escorted to the framework and assisted inside. A screen of branches was lashed into place. Now Aris was almost completely enclosed inside the framework.

The Kinda gathered round and Aris addressed his troops.

'Listen to me, all of you. Now the Among-We have a Guardian, just as the Not-We have. Our attack cannot fail.

The Not-We must be driven forth and killed, and their Dome destroyed!'

Not without some embarrassment, Tegan was giving a rather confused account of her dream, as they all hurried along the jungle path that led to the Dome.

The Doctor walked beside her, deep in thought.

'Are you listening, Doctor?' demanded Tegan indignantly.

'Yes, yes, of course. Go on about this young man who was laughing at you.'

'Well, he had this sort of – thing, on his arm. A design.'

'A snake?' asked the Doctor quickly.

'Whose dream is this, anyway?'

'Well, was it a snake?'

'Yes, it was.'

'Good. Go on.'

Tegan told of being faced with a duplicate of herself and then with a whole group of them. She told of her own disappearance into nothingness, of her terror and momentary surrender. Just as well, thought the Doctor.

Presumably the three men missing from the Expedition had encountered the mara, resisted and been driven to madness and death.

Tegan shuddered. 'It all got a bit curious after that. I was back here by myself...'

'Only you weren't yourself,' suggested the Doctor.

'That's right. Then this man came along. A native of some kind. He was unhappy...'

The Doctor looked at Karuna. 'Aris! Go on Tegan.'

‘And then...’ She looked defiantly at him. ‘That’s all.’

‘Don’t be silly, Tegan, it can’t possibly be all. Come on, what did you do?’

‘Well, if you must know, I was up a tree and I threw apples at his head. Look, it was only a dream. I wasn’t myself.’

‘You certainly weren’t,’ said the Doctor. ‘That last bit wasn’t just a dream – it was real!’

‘What?’

I’m afraid it’s all too obvious. Your mind and body were occupied – by the Mara. It found its path to this world through your dreams, just as you said, Karuna.’

‘Now hang on a minute,’ began Tegan.

‘Oh it’s all right,’ said the Doctor cheerfully. ‘You’re perfectly safe now. In fact I’ll soon be able to introduce you to the Mara, or rather to its new host.’

‘Where?’

‘At the Dome. He and his men are about to attack it!’

Aris stood inside the framework of his Guardian, in front of the Dome.

Behind him his warriors were mustered for the attack, even poor Trickster, hanging on in the rear.

Suddenly the door to the Dome slid open.

As if accepting Aris’s challenge, the Guardian of the Dome, the real Guardian, the giant metal TSS, lurched out to meet them.

## 11

## The Attack

The Kinda shrank back, terrified.

From inside his frame Aris screamed, ‘What are you waiting for? Attack! Attack!’

The Mara controlling Aris knew that the attack would be suicidal. That was unimportant. Death, with all the accompanying pain and misery, was all it hungered for –

whose death really didn’t matter.

Reluctantly the Kinda edged forward, brandishing the unfamiliar spears.

Suddenly Trickster leaped to the fore.

For a moment he stood alone in the centre of the clearing. He turned and bowed to the watching Kinda.

Then he spun round to face the TSS.

Shoulders hunched, stiff-legged, Trickster lurched forward, in an exact parody of the TSS’s clumsy gait. He came nearer...

Suddenly he sprang to one side, dancing around the TSS in a dazzling display of footwork, slapping it on front, back and shoulder, luring it to wheel round in clumsy circles, and generally making the TSS look not terrifying but foolish.

Encouraged, the Kinda warriors joined in, leaping about the machine, ducking and diving and weaving, dancing around it so that the weapons had no chance to come to bear on them. The TSS staggered around in smaller and smaller circles and finally crashed to the ground.

‘Kill, kill, kill,’ shrieked Aris. ‘Finish it off!’

The Kinda gathered around the fallen TSS laughing.

Aris’s war had become just another game.

The Doctor and the others arrived on the scene just as the TSS was struggling to right itself again.

‘I don’t think much of that for a fighting machine,’ said Tegan critically.

Doctor Todd, however, knew that the TSS – clumsy though it was – could be terrifyingly effective. ‘Something must be dreadfully wrong with it.’

The Doctor watched as the TSS, upright once more, resumed its clumsy pursuit of the quick-footed Kinda. A theory was forming in the Doctor’s mind. ‘I have an idea its controller may be rather inexperienced.’

Suddenly the TSS opened fire with its blasters, blazing wildly in all directions.

The Kinda turned and fled, all but Aris, trapped in his wooden frame ‘Come back, cowards!’ he screamed. ‘Come back!’

Somewhere another voice was shouting. ‘Help me.

Please, someone help me.’

The Doctor smiled grimly, his theory confirmed. The voice was that of Adric, and it was coming from inside the TSS.

The machine turned and lurched towards Aris’s wooden frame, guns blazing wildly.

Aris was trapped, directly in its path.

Suddenly a random shot struck the frame. Aris screamed, as the whole flimsy structure toppled to the ground.

The Doctor leaped into the clearing. ‘Adric, listen to me. It’s the Doctor!’

The TSS swung round, lurched forward and then stopped again.

'That's good,' said the Doctor encouragingly.

The TSS lumbered forward. The blasters fired again, hitting the ground at the Doctor's feet.

He leaped aside. 'Listen, Adric, I know you're frightened. But you must understand. It's your fear which is controlling the machine. It operates directly from your brain waves. Do you understand?'

After a moment the blaster muzzles drooped.

'That's better. Now listen, there's nothing to be afraid of. Just will the machine to stop and open, and you can come out.'

For a time nothing happened.

Then the front of the TSS swung open and a white-faced Adric tumbled out landing at the Doctor's feet.

In the background, unseen by the Doctor, Aris extricated himself from the ruins of the frame and limped into the jungle, clutching a wounded leg.

Adric looked up at the Doctor. 'I'm sorry, I didn't realise it would be like that.'

The Doctor helped him to get up. 'Are you all right?'

'Yes, I'm fine. Doctor, listen, you've got to get back to the Dome. Hindle has it wired for Total Destruction.'

Doctor Todd came up in time to overhear him. 'The state Hindle's in, he's capable of anything!'

Tegan hurried up and the Doctor said quickly. 'Look after Adric, will you Tegan?' With Doctor Todd at his heels he ran towards the Dome.

Adric sank to the ground, his head in his hands.

'How are you feeling?' asked Tegan awkwardly.

Adric was being hit by reaction, his limbs shaking uncontrollably. 'I feel so strange.'

'Look, just take it easy. You'll be okay.'

'The TSS was so much more difficult to control than I thought it would be.'

'Never mind. It's all over – you're safe now.'

'I'm safe,' said Adric gloomily. 'What about the Kinda I blasted?'

Tegan looked at the broken wooden frame. 'Well, I can tell you one thing, you didn't kill him. He's gone.'

In total contrast to the recent excitement outside the Dome, the Doctor found that everything *inside* was very calm. Sanders was sitting in the central command chair, Hindle was nowhere in sight, and one of the Kinda

'soldiers' stood guarding the Detonator Switch.

The whole room was covered with a beautifully made scale model W. a City. Houses, shops, government buildings, all perfectly constructed, standing in tidy rows.

Here and there little cardboard people were dotted about. In the centre of the whole thing was a very large cardboard box. Ragged square holes were cut in the side for windows, with other windows and doors drawn on in wobbly crayon.

Sanders looked up and beamed as they came in. 'Hello!'

Doctor Todd gazed round in amazement. 'Where's Hindle?'

'Oh, somewhere. We've been having fun.'

'Have you,' said the Doctor absently. 'Oh, good!

Nothing quite like it, is there?'

Proudly Sanders waved his arm around the room. 'Do you really like it?'

‘I think it’s splendid,’ said the Doctor. ‘What is it?’

‘It’s the new capital city of planet. Planet S.14. Mr Hindle made it.’

‘Where is he?’

Sanders wore an expression of childish cunning. ‘Oh, I’m sure he’s around somewhere. If you want to have a stroll round the City and look for him...’

Suddenly Hindle leaped out from inside the cardboard box. ‘Boo!’

Nobody jumped.

Hindle’s lower lip trembled and he turned petulantly to Sanders. ‘It’s all your fault! You spoilt it. I wasn’t ready.’

Tegan and Adric meanwhile were waiting in the airlock.

Tegan had told Adric of her experiences, and now Adric was telling her about Hindle’s ‘defence plan’. ‘Six charges, all wired up to a Master Detonator inside the Dome. What are we going to do?’

‘We’ll have to wait here and let the Doctor deal with things.’

‘You realise that if he makes a mistake, this whole Dome and everything for thirty miles around will be blown to pieces?’

‘Yes, I realise,’ said Tegan patiently. ‘But there’s nothing we can do except wait. Come on, sit down.’

Adric was too agitated to do anything but pace up and down. ‘He’d do it, you know, that Hindle! Don’t doubt that for a moment. He’s mad, completely mad.’

‘Yes, I’m sure he is.’ Suddenly Tegan noticed a metal cylinder bolted to the wall. ‘What’s that?’

Adric went over to examine it. ‘It looks new, somehow.’

He looked up. ‘It must be one of the explosive charges. I could try to dismantle it.’

‘Don’t touch it,’ said Tegan sharply. ‘Just leave it alone.

Even if you could fix that one, there are still five more.

And what do you know about disarming explosives anyway?’

‘Well, we must do something!’ said Adric desperately.

Tegan looked at the metal object with distaste. ‘Maybe, but fiddling with that won’t help. Suppose you set it off by mistake? Suppose this Hindle discovers what you’re doing and sets the whole lot off out of spite?’

Adric sighed. ‘I suppose you’re right. I just feel so useless.’

‘So do I. But there’s still nothing we can do except wait.’

Adric started marching up and down again. ‘Come on, Doctor. Get on with it!’

The Doctor was proceeding very slowly and cautiously and for very good reason. Hindle had just finished explaining his defence plan, and it was clear to the Doctor that he was more than half in love with the idea of setting off the charges.

‘One word from me,’ concluded Hindle sinisterly. ‘One word...’

He nodded towards the Master Detonator.

The brown hand of the Kinda soldier was inches from the button, and the hand would obey Hindle’s orders without the slightest hesitation.

‘Tell me more about your City,’ said Doctor Todd hurriedly.

Hindle’s mood changed in a flash. ‘Oh, do you really like it? I’ve never built a City before.’

‘It’s very good,’ said Doctor Todd admiringly. ‘Very good, indeed.’ She pointed to the cardboard box in the centre. ‘And what’s that?’

Hindle smiled proudly. ‘Oh, that’s my secret den. I’m the Government as well you see.’

‘Tell me more about these security arrangements of yours,’ said the Doctor, hoping to be allowed a closer look.

If he could get his hands on that Master Detonator...

But any mention of security triggered Hindle’s paranoia. He snapped to attention. ‘Security Effectiveness One Hundred Percent,’ he shouted. ‘One Thousand Percent.’ He thought again. ‘One Billion Trillion Trillion Percent. Or even more – perhaps.’ He gave a menacing scowl. ‘Do you want me to prove it?’

‘Boom!’ said Sanders happily.

‘No, no, no,’ said the Doctor hastily. ‘I wouldn’t dream of troubling you. I’d rather know how you control the Kinda.’

Hindle chuckled, very pleased with himself. ‘Oh, that’s very simple – with this.’ He held up the hand mirror he had picked up in the laboratory. ‘They’re very primitive, you know. I just looked at them in the mirror, you see.

Now they think I’ve captured their souls!’

‘All done with mirrors eh?’ said the Doctor admiringly.

‘That’s *very* clever.’

‘Do you really think so?’

‘Oh yes...’ The Doctor was edging closer to the Master Detonator, ‘May I just take a look at - ’

‘Careful,’ screamed Hindle suddenly.

The Doctor had accidentally trodden on one of Sanders’

little cardboard figures, crushing it. He bent and picked it up.

‘I’m so sorry...’

Hindle snatched it from him, tearing it in the process.

‘Now see what you’ve done!’

Gently Sanders took the figure. ‘It’s easily mended, you know. A drop of glue...’

Hindle was sobbing with rage. ‘Don’t be silly,’ he screamed. ‘You can’t mend people, can you? You can’t mend people!’ He looked round for some way of expressing his rage and despair and caught sight of the Kinda standing beside the Master Detonator. ‘Go on,’ he screamed. ‘Do it! Press the b-’

Before Hindle could complete the word, the Doctor sprang upon him and clapped a hand over his mouth.

Hindle struggled wildly, and they both fell to the ground.

The mirror slipped from Hindle’s hand and smashed.

The Kinda soldiers left their posts and came over to it, staring at the pieces in fascination. Then they walked calmly from the Dome, ignoring the struggle.

The Doctor and Hindle rolled over and over, crushing the buildings of the cardboard city.

One of Hindle’s flailing legs knocked over the table. Its contents slid to the floor, including the carved wooden box, the Box of Jhana, which the Kinda had first given to Sanders.

Without thinking, Doctor Todd snatched it up.

Suddenly Hindle broke free, threw the Doctor aside and made a desperate lunge for the Master Detonator.

His thumb was poised over the button, when suddenly he caught sight of Doctor Todd. She was ostentatiously

'hiding' something behind her back. It was enough to distract him.

'What's that?'

'Nothing.'

'Show me.'

'You've seen it already.' She brought the box from behind her back.

'Give it to me,' said Hindle petulantly. 'I want it.'

'Only if you promise not to open it.'

'All right.'

'You really promise.'

'All right, I promise,' said Hindle sulkily. 'I can always blow up the world afterwards, can't I?'

'Yes of course you can.' She held out the box.

Hindle snatched it from her. 'Are you frightened of me?'

'Terrified.'

'That's good.' He looked at the box. 'What's in it?'

'Never you mind. Don't open it.'

'Why not?'

'You promised.'

'Who cares,' said Hindle jeering.

He opened the box. He looked inside, and then looked up, disappointed. 'There's nothing in it.'

'No, there's nothing in it,' she said gently. Hindle looked again.

Suddenly he heard unearthly music. There inside the box, somehow *through* the box, he could see the soothing restful greens of the sunlit jungle.

Hindle sank to his knees, staring into the box, a smile of pure happiness spreading over his face...

Tegan and Adric heard a weird humming noise and the lights in the airlock began flickering wildly. They jumped up, staring at each other.

'What's happening?' shouted Tegan.

'How do I know? Maybe the Doctor's failed and Hindle's pressed the button.'

After a moment, the flickering lights came on again, and everything went quiet.

They stared at each other, scarcely able to realise that they were still alive.

'It's all your fault, this,' said Adric bitterly. He was feeling the strain.

'What are you talking about?'

'Well, if you hadn't fallen asleep and had that stupid dream...'

'I was possessed. My mind was taken over by the Mara.

Was that my fault?'

'It found a weakness and used it.'

'And what's that supposed to mean?'

'It would seem to prove that some of us have more control over our minds than others.'

'Like you, I suppose. When you were out there in that machine.'

'That was different!'

'You were scared out of your wits!'

‘If you must know, I was just getting the hang of the thing when the Doctor interfered!’

‘When I what?’ said a familiar voice, in mock outrage.

Their quarrel forgotten, Adric and Tegan whirled round to see the Doctor beaming at them.

‘What about the explosives, Doctor?’ asked Tegan, ever practical.

‘Deactivated. All quite harmless now.’

‘And Hindle?’ asked Adric.

‘He now appears to see the whole situation in a very different light.’

‘What’s happened to him?’

‘He looked inside the Box of Jhana, the one Sanders was given by the Kinda. The Box was programmed to summon us to the cave, but it is also a very powerful Kinda healing device. I suspect it generates sounds at a frequency beyond our ears. Sounds which help bring the mind back into phase.’

‘With what?’

The Doctor waved towards the jungle outside the door.

‘With everything Adric. With life out there. The Kinda are a very sophisticated people.’

‘Will Hindle be all right again?’

‘Oh yes. The more the mind is out of phase to begin with, the better the effect!’

Tegan was completely baffled. ‘Look, will someone tell me what’s been going on in there?’

‘I’ll explain everything in great detail – later!’ said the Doctor. ‘All this business with explosives was really just a side-show. Now we have to deal with the real danger – the Mara!’

**12**

## The Face of the Mara

Ignoring the stunned expression on the faces of his companions, the Doctor said briskly, ‘Now, where’s Aris?

The one who was in the wooden frame?’

‘Gone,’ said Tegan. ‘He escaped.’

Adric said, ‘He was wounded though. I got him with the TSS.’

‘Well, we’ve got to find him quickly, before he’s destroyed by the Mara within him – and before the Mara destroys this planet.’

Tegan groaned. ‘Just when I thought it was all over.

How will you deal with the Mara?’

‘I don’t know – yet!’

‘By the way,’ said Adric. ‘How did Hindle get control over those Kinda hostages?’

‘It was the mirror,’ said the Doctor abstractedly. ‘They thought he’d captured their souls... Got it!’

Tegan stared at him. ‘Got what?’

The Doctor turned to Adric. ‘I don’t suppose you’ve come across any very large mirrors in your wanderings about the Dome? – silly question really.’

Adric looked blank. ‘Mirrors? What kind of mirrors?’

‘Large reflective surfaces of any kind,’ said the Doctor impatiently. ‘Come on Adric, quickly. Think!’

Adric’s face lit up. ‘Solar generator panels.’

‘Where?’

‘In the store-room.’

‘Why mirrors, Doctor?’ asked Tegan.

‘What is the one thing evil cannot face? Not ever?’

Tegan thought, then gave up. ‘Well – what?’

‘Itself!’

‘What about the way the Kinda reacted to the mirror?’

objected Adric. ‘They’re not evil.’

‘Hindle captured their innocence. The Mara will rebel.

They cannot face themselves, their own evil. Don’t you see?’

‘No,’ said Tegan definitely.

‘You will,’ said the Doctor. ‘You will! Come on Adric, show me that store-room.’

Some time later, the Doctor, Tegan and Adric, Doctor Todd, Karuna and a sizeable group of Kinda stood waiting in a large jungle clearing.

The Doctor and his companions were standing in the centre. The Kinda were bunched about the edges in four separate groups. Each group was responsible for one solar generator panel. Large silver squares with bright red borders, the panels reflected like mirrors. Plans had been agreed and rehearsed, and everything was ready.

They were waiting for Aris – and the Mara. Doctor Todd looked round the clearing. ‘Do you think he’ll come, Doctor?’

‘Oh I think so, don’t you? The Mara will be smarting from defeat. It will want Aris to re-establish his power over the Kinda. What do you think, Karuna?’

Karuna was staring into space. ‘He will come.’ She tensed. ‘He is coming now. I will bring him to you.’

‘Be careful!’

Karuna’slipped away into the jungle.

Doctor Todd had another question. ‘If he does come, will it work?’

‘According to the legends, no Mara can stand the sight of its own reflection. It must recoil from itself.

Understandably, don’t you think, given its nature?’

‘Yes, I suppose so.’

‘Very well, then. Trapped in a circle of mirrors, each mirror reflecting not only the Mara itself but the reflection of all the other mirrors, in an endless series...’

‘The Mara will be surrounded not only by its own reflections, but by reflections of reflections... I see. What happens next?’

‘I very much hope it will retreat, back where it came from.’

‘The Dark Places of the Inside?’

The Doctor shrugged. ‘Or wherever. As long as it goes away from here that’s the main thing.’

‘What will happen to Aris?’

‘Well, Tegan survived. But...’

‘But what?’

The Doctor smiled. ‘It would do no harm, under the circumstances, to keep one’s fingers crossed.’

Using his spear as a staff, Aris stumped determinedly through the jungle, ignoring the pain from his wounded leg, driven on by the will of the Mara, which cared nothing for the sufferings of its servant.

Karuna appeared on the trail ahead of him.

The Mara hated Karuna, knowing she was determined on its defeat.

Aris felt a surge of murderous rage. He set off in pursuit of Karuna at a lurching run.

Karuna paused by a bush, saw that Aris was still following her, and ducked around the other side.

Aris limped up to the bush, and hurled himself around it, but Karuna had moved on.

He caught a glimpse of her on the trail ahead, and increased his pace.

Karuna led him on and on, always ahead, always just out of reach until at last he came to a large empty clearing in the jungle.

When Aris hobbled up to the clearing, he saw the Doctor standing alone in its centre, Karuna by his side.

‘Ah, there you are,’ called the Doctor. ‘We thought you must have got lost.’

‘Who are you?’ growled Aris, in the voice of the Mara.

‘I am called the Doctor.’

‘Why do you choose to interfere?’

‘Because I am a friend of the Kinda – and I share the Kinda’s aim where you are concerned.’

‘I control the Kinda...’

‘You did for a while. But no longer.’

‘I still control them. Here I am Aris. I have Voice.’

‘So I hear. But we both know that it is the voice of a Mara in the body of Aris. The snake on your arm, the symbol of your power, confirms it.’

Aris limped menacingly towards him. ‘And what if that power were to enter you, Doctor?’

‘Too late, I’m afraid. Far too late.’ Stepping back, the Doctor shouted. ‘Now.’ He ran for the edge of the clearing, followed by Karuna.

Aris lurched in pursuit – and recoiled as he found himself facing his own reflection in a huge silver mirror.

The Kinda with the mirrors had been well rehearsed.

Aris whirled round, and found another mirror behind him.

He turned – another on his left.

He turned the other way – and saw another mirror to his right.

Aris turned again and again, whirling desperately, but the mirrors were everywhere, and they were closing in. He saw not only his own unbearable reflection, but reflections of that reflection, repeated again and again and again. The Mara screamed.

‘Be ready to pull Aris free as soon as the snake leaves him,’ shouted the Doctor.

Aris’s arm was stretched out rigidly before him. The snake was pulsing, wriggling...

Suddenly it moved, leaving Aris’s arm. The snake wriggled furiously for a moment and began to grow.

From behind the mirror-holding Kinda, the Doctor and his companions looked on.

‘What’s happening, Doctor?’ whispered Adric.

‘The Mara is detaching itself. It’s leaving Aris, it has no more use for him.’

The snake flowed from Aris’s arm, and dropped to the ground, where it wriggled furiously. Aris stared dazedly at it for a moment and then seized it in a passion of hatred, as if determined to throttle it with his bare hands. But the snake was growing now at an incredible rate. Lashing furiously, it flung Aris to one side.

‘Quickly,’ yelled the Doctor. ‘Pull him clear.’

A couple of brawny Kinda dashed through the gap in the mirrors, grabbed Aris by the legs and heaved him clear.

‘Close the gap,’ shouted the Doctor. ‘Hold your ground, and keep it in the circle!’

The snake was huge now. Larger than any natural animal, it lashed about the clearing in a furious writhing coil. Its markings were red and black and white, and the fierce yellow eyes glowed with hatred.

Instinctively, Doctor Todd backed away. Surely the thing was growing so large that it could soon smash its way out of the circle...

The Doctor seemed to be everywhere, exhorting the different mirror-groups in turn.

‘Close the gaps,’ he shouted. ‘The circle *must* be kept closed, so the Mara cannot escape.’

The snake was immense now, seeming to fill the entire clearing.

‘It’s incredible,’ muttered Adric. ‘Where does it get its energy from?’

Tegan stared up at the Mara as if fascinated. She began walking steadily towards it as if hypnotised.

Luckily the Doctor saw her in time to pull her back.

‘Tegan, are you all right?’

Tegan stared up at the colossal writhing shape. ‘Is that the Mara’s true form?’

‘Yes.’

‘I had that in my mind?’

‘I’m afraid so.’

Tegan shivered uncontrollably. ‘But it’s gone now, isn’t it Doctor?’

There was no answer. The Doctor had gone to rally another group of mirror-holders.

‘ *Hold the circle*,’ he shouted. ‘Stand your ground. Close the gaps! It’s all right, stand firm. It’s starting to weaken.

*Look*!’

Suddenly it was all over.

All its energy expended in that furious spurt of growth, the Mara glowed white-hot and exploded into nothingness.

The Doctor hurried to examine the unconscious Aris.

‘He’ll be all right.’

Tenderly, the Kinda carried him away.

Pale and shaken, Doctor Todd came to stand by the Doctor. ‘So that was the Mara... Why do such things exist?’

The Doctor shook his head. ‘Who can say?’

‘But it’s gone now?’

He nodded. ‘Back to the Dark Places of the Inside. Or whatever. But not here. Not anywhere here. This world is free of it.’

Karuna came to join them. ‘That is so, Doctor. We are free of the Mara now – and of its curse.’

‘What curse?’

‘The curse of Time,’ said Karuna. ‘It is the Mara which starts the clocks.’

Doctor Todd looked wonderingly at her.

The Doctor smiled and held out his hand. ‘Come on, we can go now. It’s finished.’

Sanders and Hindle strolled through the jungle, heading back for the Dome.

They were themselves again, or rather, they were more themselves.

Hindle was still the same ambitious young officer, but purged of the inner fear that caused his arrogance and instability.

Sanders was the same grizzled old veteran, but wiser, kinder, altogether more human.

Hindle gave his superior a sidelong glance. ‘I suppose everything will have to he entered in the log, sir?’

‘Will it?’ said Sanders blandly.

With a hint of his old formality, Hindle said, ‘The Manual states that it is the duty of the Expedition Commander...’

Sanders looked puzzled. ‘What Manual?’

‘Oh, I see,’ said Hindle.

‘I never read the Manual,’ said Sanders cheerfully.

Hindle felt a great surge of relief. He gulped and said,

‘Thank you.’

‘Thank you, *sir*,’ corrected Sanders placidly.

‘Thank you, sir,’ said Hindle solemnly.

They were on their way to say goodbye to the Doctor.

A short time later, the farewells had nearly all been said.

Adric and Tegan stood waiting by the TARDIS. Hindle and Sanders stood at the edge of the clearing, with a little crowd of Kinda. Karuna was there, holding Panna’s stick, and Trickster had made himself a new Doll. Even Aris was there, still a little weak and dazed, but himself again, his brother by his side.

The Doctor was saying goodbye to Doctor Todd. ‘It’s agreed then?’

‘They’ve accepted my recommendation. "This planet is to be classified as totally unsuitable for colonisation and the unit will be withdrawn as soon as possible." Sanders is pleased.’

‘Is he?’

‘He wants to come back here when he retires. I told him he should just wander off into the jungle now, no-one would notice...’ She laughed. ‘I’m not sure about poor old Hindle though.’

‘He’ll be all right,’ said the Doctor cheerfully. ‘He was driven out of his mind, and then back in again. Just what he needed! What about you, will you stay?’

She smiled and shook her head. ‘I don’t think so.’

‘You’re not tempted by Paradise?’

‘Oh, it’s all right at first. But it’s all a bit too green for me.’

‘Doctor!’ called Tegan.

‘Coming.’

Doctor Todd looked at the TARDIS. You don’t actually go into space in that?’

The Doctor smiled. ‘That would be quite unreasonable, wouldn’t it?’

‘Well, unlikely anyway!’

‘Doctor!’ called another voice.

The Doctor turned and saw Nyssa waving from the TARDIS doorway. ‘It seems people are getting impatient.’

‘Then you must go.’

The Doctor held out his hand. ‘Goodbye.’

‘Goodbye.’ She turned and walked away, turning to wave when she reached the edge of the clearing.

The Doctor walked back to the TARDIS.

‘Hello, Doctor,’ said Nyssa.

The Doctor studied her. ‘Hello, Nyssa. How are you?’

‘Fully recovered,’ she said happily. ‘What have you been doing?’

‘Oh this and that,’ said the Doctor vaguely. ‘Having fun.’

‘Can we go now?’

The Doctor looked over his shoulder. ‘I don’t see why not. I think Paradise is a little too green for me as well!’

The TARDIS door closed behind him.

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